



G. Kneller pinxit Sculp.

BENIAMIN NEWTON. AM.



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SERMONS

ON

Several Occasions.

In Two Volumes.

Vol. I.

By the Reverend

BENJAMIN NEWTON, M. A.

Late Vicar of *Lantwit*, in the Diocese of *Landaff*,

AND

Minister of *St. Nicholas* in *Gloucester*.



LONDON:

Printed, and sold by A. BETTESWORTH and
C. HITCH in *Pater-noster-row*.

MDCCXXXVI.

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Vol. I.



BENJAMIN WILKINSON, M. A.

late Vicar of Lutterworth, in the Diocese of Lincoln.

AND

Minister of St. Andrew's Church, London.



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C. HITCHIN in Paternoster Row.

MDCCLXXVI.

TO THE
Right Reverend Father in God,
MARTIN,
By Divine Permission,
LORD BISHOP
OF
GLOUCESTER,

And to the Reverend the
Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral
Church of **GLOUCESTER,**

The following
SERMONS

(As a small Testimony of Gratitude)

Are humbly dedicated by

their most obliged

humble Servant,

JOHN NEWTON.

TO THE

Right Reverend Father in God,

MARTIN

By Divine Permission,

LORD BISHOP

OF

GLoucester



Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral
Church of GLOUCESTER

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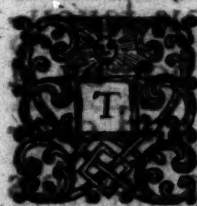
humble servant,

JOHN NEWTON



A SHORT
A C C O U N T
OF THE
A U T H O R ' S Life.

By **J. NEWTON** Son of
the Author.

HE Reputation of an Au-
thor, hitherto known to
the Publick by Report on-
ly, has made some En-
couragers of the Publication of his
Sermons very desirous of a nearer

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Acquaintance with his Life and Character.

EVERY attentive Reader indeed is naturally inquisitive in these Particulars. If he hath maintained a personal Acquaintance with the Author, he takes a melancholy Pleasure in looking back to the past Circumstances of a Friend, whose Memory is dear to him, in recalling to mind good Qualities which obtained and preserved his Esteem, and Transactions, in which, perhaps, he himself hath been personally concern'd. If he admire the Author from the Knowledge of his Writings only, the Love of his Works excites an eager Desire of a nearer Acquaintance with the Man: He would confirm his favourable Opinion of the Author by a Knowledge of his Virtues; and conceive an additional Value for his Writings from the Love and Esteem of his Person. If he know him by Report

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Report only, he is willing to have the Truth of this attested and confirmed by stronger Evidences; and he will read his Works with the greater Attention, when he is convinced of the Abilities of his Author, by the Knowledge of his Life and Character. It is to be wish'd therefore, that some more able Hand could have been procured to have done Justice to the Memory of the Author, and to have given better Satisfaction to the Reader. But the Impatience of some Subscribers, who thought the Publication of this Work already too long deferr'd, and the want of earlier Notice from the Gentlemen at whose Request this Account was undertaken, which indeed makes a masterly Pen more particularly necessary, have taken away all Possibility of procuring it. The want of these Advantages will, I hope, be thought a reasonable Apology for

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my Performances, and clear me from Censures which, too probably, I will be pass'd upon me. They who had no personal Knowledge of Mr. *Newton* will perhaps think, that I have been transported beyond the Bounds of Truth, by Zeal for the Memory of a Parent; whilst his intimate Friends, and indeed his Acquaintance in general, may more justly condemn me for want of Regard to the Memory of a Parent most tender of his Family, and of a Friend most deservedly beloved by them. But as the Case stands at present, the candid Reader will rather impute the Defects of my Attempt to the first Cause, than to either of the latter; and will be content with this plain Account of the several Stations through which this Author pass'd with Esteem and Reputation, but without any Ambition of appearing

in Publick, either in the Writings of other Men, or his own.

Mr. BENJAMIN NEWTON was born at *Leicester*, December 8th A. D. 1677. His Father was the Reverend Mr. *John Newton*, Vicar of *St. Martins* in *Leicester*, and Master of *Sir William Wigstone's* Hospital there. He was educated under Mr. *William Thomas*, Master of the free Grammar-School in *Leicester*, founded by Queen *Elizabeth*. He shew'd a very early and remarkable Genius for Learning, being of so uncommon a Memory, that for some Years before he left School, he was sent constantly on Post-days to read the News Papers, which, at his Return, he could repeat Paragraph by Paragraph as exactly and distinctly, as if he had read to his Audience from the Papers themselves. He was admitted Subfizer at *Clare Hall* in the University of *Cambridge*, Janu-
ary

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ary 29th, *A. D.* 1694. He there proceeded regularly to the Degree of Master of Arts, which he took July 7th, *A. D.* 1702. He was first prefer'd, *A. D.* 1704. by Sir *Nathan Wright* Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, to the Living of *Al-lington*, in the County and Diocese of *Lincoln*, a small Rectory in the Gift of the Crown. He married his first Wife *Jane*, the Daughter of the Reverend Mr. *John Foxcroft* Vicar of *Nuneaton* in *Warwickshire*, *A. D.* 1707. With her, *A. D.* 1708. he settled in the City of *Gloucester*, being elected by the Corporation of that City to the Cure of St. *Nicolas*, a large Parish in *Gloucester*. In the same Year, by the Interest of his Father, who was, at that Time, one of the Prebendaries, he was installed Minor Canon of the Cathedral Church of *Gloucester*. In *December*, *A. D.* 1709. he was presented
by

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by the Dean and Chapter of that Church to *Taynton*, a Rectory in the County and Diocese of *Gloucester*. In the Year 1712; the College-School at *Gloucester* became vacant. As no body was thought better qualify'd to fill this Vacancy than Mr. *Newton*, he was accordingly made Head-master, *August 3^d 1712*. Upon this he resigned his Minor Canon's Stall, the Duties of the one Station being inconsistent with the other. The School also he voluntarily resigned in *September 1718*. the Confinement of which interfered with necessary Avocations, and allow'd him too little Time for more useful Learning: How industrious and indefatigable he was in the Pursuit of this, is perhaps best known to his own Family, which scarce ever saw him at Meals, without a Book in his Hand; as if that small Portion of Time were too precious to be bestow'd upon

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upon his sensitive Appetite only; as if the Satisfaction and Improvement of his Mind were more necessary to his Nature, than the Support and Sustainance of his Body. I believe, I may venture to affirm, that if he had been as temperate in the Gratification of his rational, as he was of his sensitive Appetite, he might have obtained a longer Share of Life, though to himself less agreeable, and to others less important and beneficial. He married his second Wife, *Mary*, the Daughter of *Dr. King*, one of the Prebendaries of the Cathedral of *Gloucester*, *January 12th, 17¹⁸*. Upon the next Vacancy, he was reinstalled Minor Canon, *November 30th, 1723*. And, *September 29th, 1731*. he was made Librarian of the Cathedral Library. This, perhaps, to *Mr. Newton* himself, was one of the most pleasing and profitable Stations of his Life.

As

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As he was remarkable for a particular Neatness and Elegance in the Choice, and in the constant Use of his own private Collection of Books, it is very probable, that the same Conduct was equally agreeable and useful to him in the Management of a publick Library. His last Benefice was the Vicarage of *Lantwit*, in the County of *Glamorgan*, and in the Diocese of *Landaff*. He was presented to this by the Dean and Chapter of *Gloucester*, January 29th 1733; upon which he resigned his Rectory of *Taynton*. How agreeable this Change might be to him we cannot guess; but we may venture to affirm, that it did not prove very beneficial either to himself, or his Family. The Fatigues of a yearly Journey from *Gloucester* (where he still resided, on account of his other Preferment) were certainly prejudicial to his Constitution, which,
in

in his last Years, was but little acquainted with the Exercise of Travelling; and it is thought, that the Disappointment which he found in the Change very nearly affected his Spirits.

AFTER his last Journey, his Constitution was visibly very much impair'd; and his Family heard more Complaints of Indisposition from him, between that Time and his last Sickness, than in all the former Part of his Life. His Person was very much alter'd; the Temper of his Mind was observed to be considerably broken and discompos'd: His natural Sprightliness and Mirth indeed continued till his last Sickness; but his Spirits were so much wasted, that he was frequently forced to leave the Church in the Time of Divine Service. Had he continued longer upon this last Part of his Preferment, which he held but two Years,

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Years, he might perhaps have found the Change beneficial; but, as it was, it proved rather expensive than profitable.

ABOUT the latter End of *March*, 1735. he was seized with a Pleuritick Fever, which, after a short but very painful Illness, put an End to his Life upon *Good Friday*, *April* 4th, 1735. He was buried upon *Easter Sunday*, in his Parish Church of *St. Nicolas*, near his Father, and the rest of his own Family. He died Minister of *St. Nicolas*, Minor Canon and Librarian of the Cathedral of *Gloucester*, Vicar of *Lantwit*, and Surrogate of the Consistory Court of the Diocese of *Gloucester*, which Office he had, for many Years, discharged with great Courage and Integrity. He survived his last Wife about ten Years. He left behind him four Children; one by his first Wife, the rest by his last. The
State

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State of his Affairs at his Death, is an Evidence, that the best and most ingenious Men may err in the Conduct of their temporal Circumstances, and that *the Children of this World are wiser in their Generation than the Children of Light.*

How he behaved himself in the Discharge of his several Functions, how general an Esteem his universal Learning, good Manners, and Affability, had acquired, may be more fully learnt from the Effects which his Sickness and Death had upon the Minds of all his Parishioners and Acquaintance, than from any Idea which Expressions can give. The general Sollicitude which appeared upon his Sickness, was a strong Evidence of the publick Sense and Esteem of his Worth; and that real and universal Sorrow which attended his Funeral, sufficiently express'd the publick Loss sustained in his Death. It will appear

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pear from the Nature and Style of his Discourses, that he had more Regard to the *Practice* than to the *Speculation* of his People; that he thought the *Light* of the good Priest would most beneficially *shine forth* in the *good Works* of the People committed to his Charge; and that the sacred Truths wanted not the Ornaments and Assistances of a pompous and labour'd Expression. His Religion and Virtue were pure and unaffected; his Principles were firm and rational; he argued with an honest Zeal for Truth; he maintained his own Opinions, without dogmatically and magisterially imposing them upon others, or condemning all Men of contrary Persuasions. He was strictly attached to the Church of *England*, and regularly conformable to the Doctrine and Discipline of his Profession;

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from

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from a Principle of true Charity he lamented the Condition of those who, through Prejudice of Education, had deprived themselves of those invaluable Blessings. How engaging this Behaviour was, may be learnt from that real Regard which he constantly received from Men of the most different Principles. He had obtained such a Degree of Esteem from all Parties and Professions, that however Men differed in other Points, either Religious or Civil, they were all united in their Love of Mr. *Newton*. His Genius, indeed, seem'd peculiarly adapted to gain universal Respect. His acquired Abilities qualify'd him for the most learned; his natural; for the most gay and sprightly Conversations. His good Manners recommended him to the most polite Company, and his Condescension to the most

most humble. He could preserve Civility and good Nature even in the severest Rebukes; and he could be humble without descending from his Character. His Merit might have adorned the highest Dignities of his Function; his Contentment, and Indifference towards the Honours and Profits of this Life sweetned the lower Degree of his Station; and his Authority might have dignify'd even the very lowest. In a Word, his whole Life and Conversation were regular and inoffensive; his Example added Weight to the Authority of his Precepts; the Reputation of his Virtues pre-engaged the Favour of Strangers; and the Knowledge of them confirmed and encreased the Affections of his Friends.

It was no wonder, that the Experience of these manifold good Qualities aggravated Mens Sense of
a 2 their

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their Loss in the Death of the Person who possess'd them, and affected their Minds more than the bare Consideration of common Mortality. The surviving Family hath happily experienc'd the Influence of such extraordinary Merit, and the Truth of an old Observation, That *a Parent's Virtues are a Portion to his Children*. As the most tender of Fathers left us little more than this for our Support, we are naturally led, by this Consideration, to express our most grateful Sense of that Charity, which by encouraging the Publication of the Author's Works, hath contributed to the Relief of his Family. And we must, in a more particular Manner, confess our Obligations to those who have been industrious in exciting the Liberality of others, as well as generous in exercising their own. May these see the Family of their departed

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departed Friend inherit the Substance, as well as the Influence of his Virtues, that the Memory of the Parent may survive in the Merit of his Children, that their own Unworthiness may never make them ashamed of the Remembrance of his Virtues, or his Friends repent of their Kindnesses conferr'd upon his Family. May their Charity be rewarded in this World with its most exquisite Delight, in seeing the Publication of this Work as effectually supply the spiritual Necessities of Mankind, as it hath already relieved the temporal Wants of an Orphan Family. May our generous Benefactors be entitled to that distinguish'd Bliss which is promised to the Comforters of *the Fatherless and Needy*; and may they, by contributing to the Reformation of a
a 4 *Multitude*

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Multitude of Sins, obtain a Place among those who have turned many to Righteousness, who for their Reward shall shine forth as Stars in the Firmament of Glory.



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5 JY61

THE



SERMON I.

Preached on CHRISTMAS-DAY.

✠

MICAH V. 2.

*But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though
thou be little among the thousands
of Judah, yet out of thee shall he
come forth unto me, that is to be
ruler in Israel; whose goings forth
have been from of old, from ever-
lasting.*

THE Words of this Text are
so plain a Prophecy of
the *Messiah*, that the *Jews*
both learned and unlearn-
ed were able from them to deter-
mine,

S E R M O N I

mine, that no one could be looked upon as such, unless he were born in the Place which is here mentioned. Thus as we read MAT. ii. 4. when *Herod* had gathered all the chief Priests and Scribes together and demanded of them where *Christ* should be born, they readily answered him, *in Betlehem of Judea*, and alledged this very Text as a Proof of the Truth of their Answer. And thus JOH. vii. 42. the People without Distinction or Title, the common Multitude, when nothing else made them any longer doubt concerning *Jesus*, whether he were the *Christ*, were yet staggered with this one Difficulty, that they thought he was not born where the Scriptures had fixed the Birth-place of the *Messiah*: Shall *Christ*, say they, come out of *Galilee*? Hath not the Scripture said, that *Christ* cometh of the Seed of *David*, and out of the Town of *Betlehem*,
where

SERMON 12

3

where David was? Accordingly, it was in this Place that *Jesus* was born; as we are told *Mat. ii. 1* & *Luke ii. 4*. Nor is this a slight or inconsiderable Circumstance, or to be passed over without due Consideration; It is frequently alledged in the holy Gospels, as very material with relation to our Lord's Person, his Actions, his Sufferings and even the seemingly minute Circumstances of them, that they were according to the Scriptures; that the Prophets had spoken of them; that thus it was written, and thus it must be. It was by the Light of these Prophecies that the whole People of the Jews were enabled so well to discern the Time and Place of the Birth of their *Messiah*, as that they then, when our Lord came into the World both eagerly and confidently expected and, as *St. Luke* expresses it of *Simeon*, *ii. 25*. waited for him. And, as I have already said that *B 2* was or ready

B 3

born

4 SERMON.

ready observed, though they seemed to have no other Exception against *Jesus* his being the *Christ*, yet this alone, of their not knowing but that he was born in another Place than *Bethlehem*, was an Hindrance to their Belief.

BLESSED therefore and praised be the Wisdom and Goodness of God who hath made this their Hindrance serve for a Confirmation of our Faith: They acknowledged him to have all the other Characteristicks and Marks of the *Messiah*, and we are assured by the holy Gospels, that he had this also, that he came out of *Bethlehem*; that he was born where, according to the Scriptures, *Christ* should be born.

THE Place of the Birth of the *Messiah* being thus specified and fixed in the Text, an Account is also given in it,

I. OF

SERMON I. 5

I. OF the Nature; and

II. OF the Office of that blessed Person.

I SHALL employ the Remainder of this Discourse in speaking of each of these, and in making some practical Inferences from what shall be said in relation to, them.

First then, I am to give an Account of the Nature of the *Messiah*, as it is deducible from the Words of my Text. We are here told, that *he should come out of Bethlehem*; which means that he should be born there: From hence we learn, that the *Messiah* was *Man*; he was born, in a determined Place, of human Race, of the Offspring and Lineage of *David*; and his Birth in this respect was future, when this Text was written; it is not here said that he was or is

B 3 born;

born; but, that he *shall* come out of *Bethlehem*. Considered therefore as being born in *Bethlehem*, after this Prophecy of his Birth, we are to look upon him as a *Man*, who in that Respect then began his Being, when the Fulness of Time was come in which this and so many other Prophecies that related to him were to have their Accomplishment.

BUT was this then the very Beginning of his Existence? Was he (as the *Socinians* contend) *Nothing*, till this his Birth of a Woman? My Text furnisheth us with a very sufficient Answer to this Question: It teacheth us, that *his Goings forth have been of old*. Here we find him spoken of as having long existed before this Prophecy of him. His future Birth, as a *Man*, is spoken of in a Term proper to express that Futurity: He *shall* come forth out of *Bethlehem*; but his Goings forth are said by the Prophet
to

S E R M O N I.

7

to have been and that of *old*, at the Time when this Prophecy was delivered; which is surely a sufficient Proof, that he was in being long before the Time in which he became *Man* by being born in the City and of the Family of *David*. It will concern us therefore to enquire, what he was in his Goings forth of *old*, what he was before he came forth of *Bethlehem*?

THERE are two Kinds of Beings, under one of which he must certainly be ranked before his becoming *Man*: He was either *created*, or *uncreated*, He was either a *Creature* or He was *God*. That he was a *Creature* is under much Disguise and Equivocation contended for by the *Arians*: but my Text may instruct us, that they do grievously err and oppose the Truth in this their Opinion. For every Thing that was created had a Beginning; there was a time

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B 4

thin

in which it was not: But my Text affirmeth of the *Messiah*, that his *Goings forth* were not only of old, long before the Time of this Prophecy, but from *everlasting*, or, as it is more emphatically and significantly expressed in the Original, *from the Days of Eternity*. He existed from *Eternity*, and therefore was never *created*. On the contrary, the Scriptures with sufficient Clearness do assure us, that all Things that were created were made *by him*; as we may read in the Beginning of St. *John's* Gospel, in the Beginning of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, and in other Places.

FROM what has been said concerning the Nature of the *Messiah*, it appears that my Text represents him as *God* and *Man*; as *God*, from everlasting; and as *Man*, who in the Fulness of Time came out of or was born in *Bethlehem*, the Place in which the *Messiah* should be born.

SERMON I. 9

born according to the Scriptures.

I SHALL now proceed to consider

Secondly, WHAT is here said with respect to the Office of the *Messiah*. It is to be a *Ruler in Israel*, that is in God's Kingdom and over his People.

OUR Lord *Jesus Christ*, to whom this Prophecy is applied in the New Testament, is frequently spoken of under this Character of a *Ruler*; and that not as an *inferior* one, but as a *King* that should reign: Nor will it be difficult to shew, that this Character is with strictest Propriety and Truth ascribed to *Him*.

If we consider the several essential Properties of sovereign Authority and Power, we shall find them all in *Him*, and that in the most eminent Degree. These we may reckon to be such as follow: He had Subjects who acknowledged him for their King; He gave Laws to them which they

80 SERMON 12

they acknowledged themselves bound to obey; He enforced these Laws with Rewards for the obedient, and Punishments for such as should not submit to them. He is thus possessed of all the necessary Powers of a King that should reign and execute Judgment and Justice; as he is said to do *JER. xxiii. 5.* Nor doth he want the Solemnities and Ceremonies of Kingly Inauguration to distinguish him as a King, and to make his sovereign Authority publicly known. His Title is not only asserted by himself, but proclaimed by the Prophets upon Earth, *ACTS x. 43.* and by Angels, *LUKE i. 33.* and the expresse Voice of God himself from Heaven, *LUKE iiii. 22.* He is *anointed* by God *above his fellowes*; his *Throne* is *for ever and ever*; a *Sceptre of Righteousness* is the *Sceptre of his Kingdom*, *HEB. i. 9. 18.* He is *crowned with Glory and Honour*, *HAB. iiii. 9.* He is *covered with the*
Robe

S E R M O N I. II

Robe of Righteousness ISA. lxi. 10. And God hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name which is above every Name, that at the Name of Jesus every Knee should bow, of Things in Heaven, and Things in Earth, and Things under the Earth. PHIL. ii. 9, 10.

It is very properly and usefully observed by Interpreters, that the same Word which in my Text is translated a *Ruler*, and which is its true Meaning when applied to any Person in a political Sense and in a State of Peace, is also equally capable of being rendred a Leader or Captain in War, or a Guide in a Journey. And accordingly our Lord *Jesus Christ*, as he is our Prince of Peace, so is he the Captain of our Warfare, and the Guide of our Feet in our Passage through the perplexed and dangerous Wilderness of this World, to our only safe Home that heavenly *Jerusalem*, of which we are Citizens, and which is
the

12 SERMON I.

the Mother of us all. This alone is the Place of our establish'd Peace, and therefore here it is, and not in this lower Region of Trouble and Danger, that our Lord principally appeareth as a King invested and adorned with the Ensigns of peaceable and secure Majesty and Dominion. But upon Earth we are in a State of War, in constant Conflict with, and Peril from manifold and powerful Enemies; and therefore here he uses the Armour of his Righteousness to fight for us and to protect us. Upon Earth we are in a State of Pilgrimage, Strangers and Foreigners, at a Distance from our native Countrey and ignorant of the sure Way to it: He therefore here offers himself as a Guide to us, to direct and conduct us; He is indeed not only our Leader, but as he tells us, *JOH. xiv. 6.* He is himself our *Way*; and therefore while we follow him, we cannot wander or

lose

S E R M O N I. 13

lose ourselves, but shall continually advance and draw nearer to the right End of our Journey.

It well deserves our Notice, that the Prophet in further describing the Office of the *Messiah*, at the 4th verse of this 5th Chapter saith among other Things, that he shall *feed in the Strength of the Lord*. If we consult the Margin, we shall find, that what is here rendred *feed* is literally to be translated *rule*; and if we look into MAT. ii. 6. where this Prophecy is cited and applied, we shall find it said, that he should *rule* God's People. But what is remarkable is, that the Word which is here translated to *rule*, doth LITERALLY and in its primary Signification mean to *feed*. From hence let us learn, that our Lord *Jesus Christ* is not only our King, who governs us and whom we ought to obey; our Captain, who leads us in our spiritual Warfare,

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Warfare, under whose Banner therefore we are to fight against his and our own Enemies; and our Guide in our Travail, whom therefore we are to follow, and whose Directions we ought with the utmost Care to observe; but it is He also, who supplies our Necessities, who provides for our Sustenance and prevents our fainting by the Way, by giving to us that Food, that Bread of Life without which we cannot subsist, and which we of ourselves knew not how to find here in the Wilderness.

I HAVE now, as I proposed, given an Account of the Nature and of the Office of the *Messiah*. It remains for me to infer something practically from what has been said in relation to them.

FIRST then let us duly consider what has been delivered concerning the Nature of that Person who, as

on

SERMON 15

on this Day, was born in *Bethlehem*, and we shall find the Knowledge of it very useful and instructive. He did not only come forth into the World at *Bethlehem*, but his Goings forth were of old, *from the Days of Eternity*. He is therefore to be regarded by us, not only as a Partaker of our Nature, but as the *Eternal*, that is, as *God*. And what doth such a Regard require from us? Certainly, that we should worship him as *God*, and as he always hath been worshipped by his People; that we should reverence and adore his Majesty; that we should with our utmost Endeavours serve and obey and strive to please him; and that we should with Admiration and the most thankful Acknowledgments celebrate that infinite Goodness, Love and Condescension to us, which he so gloriously manifested in taking upon himself our poor, weak, and as our Sins had rendered

16 SERMON

rendred it, miserable and undone Nature, that he might reserve and save us.

FURTHER; as the Consideration of his divine Greatness doth exact our Subjection and Obedience and render our Obligations thereto indispensible, so doth it quicken and encourage us in the Performance of our Duty, whatever the Difficulties are which we may apprehend and shall meet with in our Discharge of it. The Opposition we shall encounter is from mighty and subtle Enemies: But we shall fight against them with assured Courage, while we consider, that though our Adversaries are strong, yet our *Leader* is invincible, and hath already overcome them and broken their Strength. The Way we are to travail through is long and very difficult to proceed in; but we know, that our *Guide* is able to conduct us through it with Certainty and Safety,

SERMON I. 17

ty, as having himself already gone through it with Success, and that He standeth at the End of our Course holding out to us that Crown of Glory which is the appointed Reward of our Perseverance in it. Our Power is small and our Necessities many and great: But we shall never grow weary or faint while we consider, that the Lord the Eternal One is our Strength; that it is He who *feedeth* us, and therefore we shall be sure that we can lack nothing.

Secondly, He is our *Ruler*, our *King*: Let us acknowledge Him for such as we ought to do; let us yield a willing and constant Obedience to his Laws, and let us assure our selves of all the inestimable Privileges of his Kingdom. We know that the Seat, the settled Possession of that Kingdom is in Heaven; let us therefore constantly aim at coming *thi-*
C
ther,

18 SERMON I

ther, as the only Place where we shall dwell safely and enjoy a secure and undisturbed Rest. This World is not our abiding Place, but only our Passage to it: Let not therefore the worthless Pleasures or fruitless Cares of this Life engage our Affections or Endeavours, which may be better and with so much greater Advantage applied and directed to the Joys and Glories of that which is to come.

He is our *Leader*, the Captain of our Salvation: Let us fight with Constancy and Assurance of Victory under him against the Enemies of our our Souls and of his Kingdom, and never enter into any Treaty or Agreement with them. If we do not resist them, they will destroy us: Let us therefore manfully oppose them to our Lives End and He will enable us to overcome them.

He

SERMON I. 19

He is our Guide: Let us therefore hearken to him and follow him; let us carefully receive and observe the Directions he has given us and follow the blessed Steps of his most holy Life; and then we shall be sure to find the Way to his Happiness and Glory, how intricate and dangerous soever the Allurements or Afflictions and Crosses of this present evil World may render it to us.

Lastly, He is our Pastor, he provides Supplies for all our Wants; He feeds and nourishes our Souls with the spiritual and heavenly Food of his Doctrine and Word; let it be our Care to receive the Nourishment which it affords, and we shall find our selves strengthened and supported by it; we shall find our Faith confirmed, our Hopes enlivened and our Charity enlarged; we shall be enabled to persevere in the Way,

C 2 which

20 SERMON 12

which He directeth us to walk in,
and to attain to the Glory and
Felicity, of which he is the Author,
the Purchaser and the Bestower.



enabled to persevere in the Way,
which



SERMON II.

Preached on CHRISTMAS-DAY.

ISAIAH LX. 1, 2, 3.

*Arise, shine; for thy Light is come,
and the Glory of the Lord is risen
upon thee. For behold, the Dark-
ness shall cover the Earth, and gross
Darkness the People: But the Lord
shall arise upon thee, and his Glory
shall be seen upon thee. And the
Gentiles shall come to thy Light and
Kings to the brightness of thy Rising.*



IN the foregoing Chapter
the Prophet gives an Ac-
count of the Condition
which Men were in before
our Saviour's coming in the Flesh.

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From the Beginning to the 8th Verse their manifold and provoking Wickedness is taken Notice of. And at the 8th Verse the Cause of this Wickedness is assigned, namely, their Ignorance of their Duty and their Errors and Mistakes concerning it. From the Beginning of the 9th Verse to the End of the 15th the Effects of their Sins are represented, which are Doubtfulness and Fear, Perplexity and Distress; while they could perceive their Wickedness and the Anger of God, as we are told at the 12th and 15th Verses, but could discover no Means of being freed from the one or escaping the other, as we find at the 16th.

THIS Account being given of the sinful and lost and by human Means irrecoverable State of Mankind, the Prophet proceeds to shew with what Regard Almighty God looked upon them while they were in this Condition,

SERMON II. 23

tion, and having at the 18th Verse observed how he will treat such as by impenitent Wickedness declare themselves his Adversaries, he in the 20th and 21st Verses acquaints us with the Means which his Mercy provides for the Recovery and Salvation of those, that by turning from their Transgressions should become capable of his Favour. He speaks of a *Redeemer* that should come to *Zion*, and of a Covenant which God would make with Man. And for these he in the Words of my Text calls upon the Church to rejoice, and to resume its true and innate Splendor, to arise and to shine with that Glory of the Lord which then was only promised, but now is risen upon it.

I SHALL from the Words of this Text endeavour to lay before you

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I. THE

24 SERMON II.

I. THE Condition which Mankind was in before our Saviour's Appearance in the Flesh.

II. THE State which he has put it into.

III. THE Reasonableness and Nature of that Joy which the Church is called upon to shew.

First, I AM to lay before you the Condition which Mankind was in before our Saviour's Appearance in the Flesh; which is the same with the Condition of those upon whom the Light of the Gospel is not yet risen. This is described in the 2^d Verse of my Text, *Darkness covered the Earth and gross Darkness the People.* These Words are figurative, but very significant, and according to the Senses they are used in holy Scripture to express, do at once represent to us the Wickedness which
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SERMON II. 25

the World was guilty of, the Cause of its Continuance in Wickedness, and the Effects and Consequences of that Wickedness. I shall not need to multiply Quotations for the Proof of this: Some few however I shall produce.

By *Darkness* in the sacred Style is often signified Sin and Wickedness; as in ROM. xiii. 12. and EPH. v. 11. in both which Places wicked Deeds are called Works of *Darkness*. And as the holy Scriptures call Wickedness itself *Darkness*, so by the same Word do they intend the Cause of Mens Continuance in that Wickedness. The Cause of Mens continuing in Sin is not only their being destitute of the Grace of God, which however is expressed by *Darkness* and the Want of the Light of God's Countenance, but also the Ignorance wherewith they are blinded, by reason of which, as they know not how
to

26 SERMON II.

to please God, so they must of Necessity continue in Wickedness. This is also in Scripture called *Darkness*; and that very properly, as being the same to the Understanding which Blindness is to the Body, the Absence of that Light whereby it should be guided. Thus LUKE i. 79. that is called *Light* to them that sit in Darkness which at the 77th Verse is called *Knowledge* of Salvation; and (to omit many other Places) in JOH. i. 15. we are told that *the Light shined in Darkness and the Darkness comprehended it not*: The Doctrine of Jesus Christ and the Example of his holy Life were manifested to Men, but they by reason of the Ignorance with which their Souls were darkned would take no Notice of them nor receive Instruction from them.

Thus by Darkness the holy Scripture expresses both Sin itself and the Cause of Mens continuing in it: By
the

SERMON II. 27

the same Word it also signifies the Effects and Consequences of Sin. Thus the Perplexities and Fears with which a guilty Conscience is disquieted in this World are very elegantly described in the 9th and 10th Verses of the lix Chapter of this Book of ISAIAH by *Obscurity* and *Blindness*: And the Punishment of Wickedness in the World to come are MAT. XXV. 30. called *utter Darknes* and in the general Epistle of St. JUDE 13. *the Blacknes of Darknes for ever*.

WE may now perceive the Extent of the Terms used in the 2^d Verse of the Text, and clearly apprehend the Condition of Mankind, while it was covered with *Darknes* in the utmost Degree, with *gross Darknes*. It was defiled with Sin, blinded with Ignorance disturbed with conscious Terrors for the present, and liable to eternal Misery hereafter.

IN

28 SERMON II.

IN this State, Mankind is represented to be by Nature in holy Scripture. And secular Authors through the whole Series of prophane Antiquity do in this respect no way disagree with the Account here given, but by what they tell us of the Practice of Men and of their Rules and Maxims both of Religion and Morality confirm the Charge of Wickedness and Ignorance, which the Divine Revelation brings against the whole Race of Mankind. For the Proof of this, it is not necessary to produce the Accounts which History gives of the uncivilized and barbarous Parts of the World, of the execrable and bloody Rites which they used in the Service of their Idols, or the perfidious and cruel Treatment which they found from one another. Sufficient Instances of Wickedness and Ignorance, of mistaken Notions of Religion and of the Duties of Men with

SERMON II. 29

with respect to themselves and one another, are to be met with amongst those who were accounted the most refined and understanding Part of Mankind.

IF we consider the Principles of Religion which were universally acknowledged and received amongst them, the Notions which they entertained of the Deity and of the Service which was due to him, we shall have Cause to wonder how human Reason could be so blinded, or such absurd and senseless Opinions so far prevail amongst Men. The right Use of Reason will by a very short Deduction discover, that there is one only Almighty Eternal God who created and preserves Mankind and is to be served and worshipped by it. But the Notions of the heathen World were very different from this. They instead of one God imagined many; instead of acknowledging a Creator
of

30 SERMON II

of the Universe who had been from Eternity, they assigned Times and Places for the Births of their Deities; they thought their Gods had Bodies as well as Spirits, were subject to Passions, were liable to Punishments, were guilty of Crimes, were divided into Factions, were sometimes capable of receiving Hurt from Men, at other Times desirous to do them Good or Hurt, but not able. These were the Divinities, which they thought they were obliged to serve: To these they paid their Adorations: From these they expected Pardon for Sins which they themselves were guilty of, Deliverance from Misfortunes which they themselves laboured under, and of these they begged for Blessings which they wanted for themselves.

AND as they were thus mistaken in the Nature of the Divinity the Object of their Worship, so were they equally ignorant of the Man-
ner

SERMON II. 31

ner of serving him. They endeavoured to represent their Deities to their bodily Senses by Images which as they thought resembled them, to which they transferred the Adoration which is due to *God* alone. The Strength and Riches of Multitudes were employed and exhausted in erecting magnificent Temples for these, living and sometimes human Sacrifices were offered to senseless and inanimate Idols, to which Men first gave Shape and Ornaments and afterwards Worship and Adoration.

It is indeed to be acknowledged, that some few Men among them by a better Use of their Reason, though they did not attain to a sufficient Knowledge of God, did yet clear their Minds in great Measure of these absurd and unworthy Thoughts of him: But the Notions which I have mentioned were, what by being generally entertained became the universal

32 SERMON II.

niversal Theology of the heathen World; and idolatrous Rites were established as the publick Worship and Religion by even the wisest Nations of it: So that, whether we consider the Wickedness of that Idolatry, which Mankind was universally guilty of, or that gross Ignorance, which it was an undeniable Proof of, we must acknowledge that the Earth was covered with Darkness and the Inhabitants of it with the thickest Darkness.

AND as it appears that they were very ignorant of the Nature and Duties of Religion, so is it as evident that they fell very far short of the true Notion of moral Virtue with respect to one another and themselves, and that so much, as to bestow upon the greatest and most pernicious Vices, those Applauses and that Honour, which the most consummate Virtues alone can deserve to be crowned

SERMON II. 33

crowned with. Thus Ambition, which is the Cause of the greatest Injuries which Men do to one another, was by them accounted an honourable and commendable Desire of Glory; and the destroying one Part of Mankind was the readiest Way to gain the Praises of the other. It was by this Means that Men advanced themselves to the Dignity of Gods and Heroes; and they stand highest in the Records of heathen Honour, whose only way to raise themselves was by standing upon those Ruins of the World, which they had been the Occasions of.

For a Man voluntarily to deprive himself of Life, was by them accounted the noblest Action he could do, and an Instance of the greatest Bravery and Magnanimity. Actions of this Kind were recorded with Commendation by their Historians, celebrated by their Poets, committed

D

by

34 SERMON II

by their Philosophers, and in some Cases encouraged by their Religion. A certain Proof of their Ignorance of the Nature of virtuous Deeds, while they reckoned this one, which is in reality a Mixture of Wickedness and Weakness, of Rebellion against God and Want of Fortitude and Courage to support themselves with under the Weight of Adversity. These Instances, which have been taken not from the common Multitude of Mankind, but from among the wisest and best of the Heathens and from among those Actions which they accounted virtuous and commendable, may serve to shew how gross the Darkness was with which the Earth was covered, how universal its Wickedness, and how great its Ignorance.

It is said with relation to the *Jews* that, as they had a Revelation of Gods Will and a Law given to them

SERMON II. 35

them by him, they cannot be supposed to have been equally ignorant and sinful with the rest of Mankind; it will be answered that by the false Constructions which they put upon Part of that Revelation and the gross Notions they entertained of the rest, they had lost much of that Knowledge which was peculiarly vouchsafed to them; and if they still retained a greater Measure of it than the rest of Mankind was possessed of, it served only to aggravate their Wickedness, who, though better informed than other Men, were equally guilty of Sin with them.

Thus did Sin and Ignorance overspread the whole World: And if we consider further, that this Wickedness offended God and exposed all Mankind to his avenging Justice, and that this Ignorance made Men incapable of discovering any Way to regain the Favour of God

36 SERMON II.

or to escape his Anger, we shall then have a full View of what I undertook to shew in this first Part of my Discourse, the State that Mankind was in before our Saviour's Appearance in the Flesh. It was as St. LUKE expresses it, i. 79. *in Darkness and in the Shadow of Death*: It was under Sentence of Condemnation for its Wickedness, and could find no Way to avoid the Punishment which it had deserved.

I AM now to shew

Secondly, IN what State it is at present placed.

THE Text tells us, that its *Light is come* and that *the Glory of the Lord* is risen upon it. These Terms are used to signify the great and advantageous Alteration that is made in the World by the coming of our Saviour into it, being directly opposed to those which were used to express

SERMON II. 37

express its former Condition: It is covered with Light and with the Brightness of Divine Glory: The Darknes of Sin and Guilt have given way to the Light of Righteousness; the Clouds of Ignorance and Error are dispelled; the Shades of Death, the black and uncomfortable Apprehensions and Fears of future Punishments are chased away and vanished from among those who turn their Eyes to the Light of the perfect Doctrine and Example of *Christ*, and to the Prospect which he hath opened to everlasting Happiness.

THE mysterious Incarnation of the Son of God is a Truth, the Matter of which gives us abundant Reason to praise God: But the *Manner* of it, if we cannot be contented without searching after it, will serve only to baffle our Endeavours and to employ us in useless and dangerous

38 SERMON H.

Speculations. It will be more for our Advantage to consider the excellent final Causes and beneficial Effects of this wonderful Dispensation of the Divine Providence. We shall see in every Part of it undoubted Marks of infinite Justice, Wisdom and Mercy; of the Justice which required Satisfaction, of the Wisdom which designed the Method of it, and of the Mercy which accepted it. We shall perceive the Necessity of the Union of the Divine and human Natures; we shall understand that it was necessary that he who undertook to redeem us should be *Man*, that he might be made a Sacrifice, and *God*, that his Merits might be sufficient for our Redemption; that he should be *God* to declare his Will, and to make himself known to us, and *Man* to represent us to *God*, and to intercede for us to him. We shall also find as the Necessity of

SERMON H. 39

of this Union, so likewise the Effects of it, in the Pardon it has purchased for our Sins upon our Repentance, in the Instructions we have received how to please and serve God acceptably here, and in the Assurance which we have of being rewarded for so doing hereafter.

By such Considerations as these we shall be convinced of the Truth of that which is the Subject of this second Part of my Discourse, the State which our Saviour *Jesus Christ* hath placed us in, and the advantageous Alteration which he hath made in our Condition, since his Merits have restored to us Righteousness, his Example and Doctrine have given us Knowledge, and his Mercy and Love have provided for us an Eternity of perfect Happiness. Thus instead of the Darkness of Sin, Ignorance and Terror with which the Earth and its Inhabitants were cove-

40 SERMON II.

red, is the Light of the Lord arisen, and his Glory visible among the Sons of Men.

I SHALL not have gone through the Subject I am now treating of, 'till I have given an Account of the last Verse of my Text, *and the Gentiles shall come to thy Light, and Kings to the Brightness of thy Rising.* 'Till the preaching of the Gospel to the World, the *Jews* alone of all the Nations in it were in Covenant with God: The rest of Mankind, for Reasons known to the infinite Wisdom of God, were excluded from a federal Right to those Promises to which the Children of *Israel* were entitled, were destitute of the express Revelation of the Will of God, and abandoned to the Blindness of Ignorance and Error, and to the Delusions and Tyranny of the *Prince of Darknes*. But in the Fulness of Time God was pleased to give to Man-
kind

SERMON II. 41

kind Deliverance from this Bondage and Light to them that sat in this Shadow of Death: And the *Gentiles* as well as the *Jews* were made Heirs of eternal Felicity: The glad Tidings of Salvation were proclaimed to the World and received joyfully by it; and the Rulers of the Earth by Degrees became Servants to the Son of God, subdued by that Truth and Divine Authority which were visible in his Doctrine, and from Persecutors of his Church, became its Defenders, *its nursing Fathers and Mothers.*

HAVING now in the first and second Parts of this Discourse given an Account of the different Conditions of Mankind before and since our Saviour's Coming in the Flesh, it remains in the

Third Place for me to shew the Reasonableness and the Nature of that Joy which in my Text the Church

42 SERMON H.

Church is called upon to rejoyce with.
*Arise, shine; for thy Light is come
 and the Glory of the Lord is risen up
 on thee.*

Is it be reasonable at any Time
 to rejoyce, and if our Joy ought to
 bear Proportion to the Advantages
 we have received; it is already evi-
 dent, that the greatest Joy we can
 expresse is highly reasonable and well
 becoming us. The Joy of condem-
 ned Criminals at the sudden Receipt
 of unexpected Pardon, the Joy of
 the Blind restored to Sight, the Joy
 of those who are freed from Slavery
 and Bondage and advanced to Li-
 berty and Honour is, though in a
 less Degree, of the same Nature with
 that which we ought to rejoyce with,
 who by the Grace of God are par-
 doned and delivered from Condem-
 nation, who by the Light of Truth
 are brought out of the gross Dark-
 ness of Ignorance and Error, and by
 the

SERMON II. 43

the Merits of *Christ* are freed from the Slavery of Sin and the Tyranny of the Devil, are in this Life possessed of the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God, and in the next shall be made Partakers of the Happiness of Heaven. It appears therefore, that as we have received the most valuable of Blessings, so it is meet and right that we should be filled and transported with the utmost Delight and Joy; that our Hearts should abound with the Love and our Mouths with the Praise of that Lord who, by the Light which He hath caused to shine upon us, hath at once vouchsafed to us so many inestimable Benefits; it is highly reasonable that we should *arise, because the Light is come and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon us.* As a dejected Posture of Body is a Sign of the Sorrow and Disquiet of the Mind, and

is

44 SERMON II.

is used in sacred and profane Writings to signify the Want of Hope and Comfort, so the contrary to it is a Sign of the lively Sense Men have of the Blessings they enjoy and of the Delight and Complacency their Minds are filled with. When therefore the Text calls upon us to *arise*, it puts us in mind to lay aside all the Marks of our former Misery, and by our outward Behaviour to express the Satisfaction and inward Pleasure of our Hearts. Thus the same Figure is made use of to the same Purpose in Isa. lii. 2. where the Prophet calls to *Jerusalem*, that is the Church, to *arise and shake itself from the Dust*; which from the known Custom of Mourners in the *East* to sit upon the Ground and to cover themselves with the Dust, must be interpreted of quitting with the Sense of

their

SERMON II. 45

their Sorrows all the Signs and Tokens of it.

THE Nature of the Joy we are to be glad with, is most fully expressed in the other Word which the Prophet uses, namely that of *shining*; *because Light is come and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon us*. The Light which is here spoken of is, as I have already shewn, the Religion of *Christ*, which has brought us out of the thick Darkness of Guilt and Ignorance, and removed from us fearful Expectations of future Misery. When therefore we are required to *shine*, we are commanded to make Use of that Light, which is come upon us. The Brightness and Lustre of Christianity consists in the Truth and Excellency of its Doctrines and Precepts, and in the Glory of those Rewards which it proposes to those who live according to it; by these it
shone

46 SERMON II

shone in the Eyes of Men and became the directing Light of the World: By these it recommended itself to Mankind, and by the Light which it afforded, brought them to the Light of everlasting Life.

ARE we then desirous to *shine*, as the Prophet here expresses it? we perceive how we must do it: We must receive the Truths of Christianity and obey its Rules: We must imitate the instructive Example of the Life of *Christ*, and as far as we are able tread in his Steps, and practise that Righteousness which he was the Author of. It was by these Rays of Light that we were brought from the gross Darkness we had been buried in, and by these only it is, that we can so *shine*, as to bring any Benefit to the rest of Mankind, any Glory to God, or any Happiness and
 Reward

SERMON II. 47

Reward to ourselves. It is thus, according to our Saviour's Command, MAT. v. 16. that *our Light must shine before Men, that they may see our good Works, and with us glorify our Father which is in Heaven.*

SERMON III.

Preached on Good-Friday

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Our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ did by two Sorts of Proofs chiefly manifest himself to be the *Messiah*. The one was by alledging the Divine Power which the Miracles he shewed him to be endued with.

SERMON

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# SERMON 113

Reward to ourselves. It is thus  
 according to our Saviour's Com-  
 mand, MAT. V. 16. that our Light  
 must shine before Men, that they  
 may see our good Works, and with us  
 glorify our Father which is in Heaven.  
 as much as we are desirous to shine, as  
 the Prophet here expresses it: we  
 perceive how we must do it. We  
 must receive the Truths of Christia-  
 nity and obey it. We must  
 imitate the illustrious Example of  
 the Life of Jesus Christ as we  
 are able and we must and pra-  
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 these Rays of Light that we were  
 brought from the gross Darkness  
 we had been buried in, and by  
 these only it is that we can so  
 shine, as to bring any Benefit to  
 the rest of Mankind, any Glory  
 to any Happiness and  
 Reward



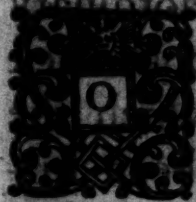
# SERMON III.

Preached on GOOD-FRIDAY.



JOH. XIX. 37.

*And again another Scripture saith,  
they shall look on him whom they  
pierced.*



OUR blessed Saviour *Jesus*  
*Christ* did by two Sorts of  
Proofs chiefly manifest  
himself to be the *Messiah*:  
The one was by alledging the Divine  
Power which the Miracles he wrought  
shewed him to be endued with,

E

as

### 50 SERMON III.

as an Argument of his being sent from God: The other, and to the *Jews* no less convincing Proof, was his so exactly fulfilling the Things which were written concerning the *Messiah* in the Law and the Prophets. And his Apostles after him proceeded in the same Method and in the same Way of reasoning with those who expected from them Proofs of their Master's being the *Christ* of God.

As for the former of these Ways of proving the Truth of *Jesus* his being the *Messiah* from the many Miracles he wrought, I shall not insist upon it at this Time, my Text having respect only to the latter, and that in a very extraordinary Manner, since it not only looks back to an ancient Prophecy, which the *Evangelist* affirms to have been fulfilled by our Saviour's Sufferings, but also forward to further Consequences,



## SERMON III. 51

ces, and those of the most important Nature.

THAT we may rightly apprehend the full Meaning of my Text, it will be proper to consider

I. THAT Scripture to which it refers, and

II. IN what Manner the Prophecy contained in it hath been and shall be fulfilled.

*First*, I AM to consider the Scripture which my Text refers to: And this we shall find in the xii<sup>th</sup> Chapter of ZECHARIAH at the 10<sup>th</sup> Verse.

*And I will pour upon the House of David and upon the Inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of Grace and of Supplications, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced.* This

Prophecy in its primary Signification is understood of the Repentance and Returning to God of those who had

## 52 SERMON III.

by their Wickedness offended or as the Scripture expressees it Eph. iv. 30. *grieved the holy Spirit of God*, and in my Text it is applied to the literal and real piercing of the Body of *Jesus Christ* upon the Cross. And are these two then the same Thing? and is it all one to pierce the Son and the Father? Certainly this is some Proof of the Divinity of our Lord, and accordingly is interpreted as such by those who have given Explanations of these Texts. The Scripture which is by the inspired *Evangelist* applied to our Lord, and said to be fulfilled in his Sufferings, is spoken of God himself, and the same who was *pierced* is he, who *poureth upon Men the Spirit of Grace and of Supplications*, which can be done by God alone. But as this Prophecy could not in a literal Sense have been fulfilled of God considered as a *Spirit* only, it is also alledged as a Proof of

## SERMON III. 53

of our Lord's Humanity as well as of his Divinity, of his being united to such a Nature as was capable of such Sufferings as are here spoken of.

NOR need we a better Evidence, that there is some Strength in the Argument drawn from this Text for the Proof of the Divine Nature of *Glorist*, than this; that they who are Enemies to the Belief of this Truth endeavour by all the Art they can to evade the Force of it. Thus *Soblingius* one of the most celebrated *Socinian* Writers in his Comment upon the Words of my Text observes, that whereas in the Prophecy of ZECHARIAH God speaks in his own Person, *they shall look on Me whom they have pierced*; St. *John* leaves out what ascribes it immediately to God, and instead of *Me* saith, they shall look on *Him* whom they have pierced. In what Manner he could make this



## 54 SERMON III.

Observation serviceable to his Cause, as it is evident he thought it might be, is hard to conjecture: For till it can be shewn that our Lord could fulfil this Prophecy, and yet be different from him of whom it was made, it will stand as a Proof and a very sufficient one, that if he of whom it was first meant was God, none but God could answer the Prediction and be looked upon in the Sense of it.

In what respect our Lord was pierced, and what is to be understood by looking upon him, we shall perceive when we consider in the

*Second Place*, in what Manner the Prophecy as applied to him hath been and shall be fulfilled.

AND here let us first call to mind how he was pierced, and we shall find that his blessed Body was pierced with cruel and mortal Wounds,

Opti-

E 3

and

### SERMON III. 55

and his Soul with the most afflicting Agonies and Sorrows. After the most insolent and scornful as well as painful and grievous Mockery and reproachful Usage, his Persecutors proceeded to the fully answering this Prophecy: They tore his Head with Thorns and his Body with Scourges, they pierced his Hands and his Feet, and on them thus pierced they hung the whole Weight of his Body upon the Cross, that the Pain of those Wounds, which by such as examine the Contexture of human Bodies is judged of all others, that could continue so long, the most intense and exquisite, might by slow Degrees of still increasing Torment put an End to his Life. Thus did they *pierce* him and thereby answer that Part of the Prophecy which was recorded of him.

LET us next consider them as *looking upon him whom they had pierced;*

## 56 SERMON III.

and with what different Views they did this the holy Scriptures will sufficiently inform us. The first Account of their looking upon him as he hung exposed to their Sight upon the Cross, is of their doing it with Malice and Scorn, as we find in MAT. xxvii. 39, 40. and in other Places of the other *Evangelists*, where we are told, that *they that passed by, reviled him, wagging their Heads and saying, thou that destroyest the Temple, and buildest it in three Days, save thyself: If thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross.* As it is an undeniable Proof of the vilest Temper and Disposition in any one to insult and triumph over the Misfortunes, much more the Miseries and Sufferings of other Men, how deservedly soever they are brought upon them; so nothing is a greater and more sensible Addition, to and Aggravation of their Afflictions, than  
such



## S E R M O N III 57

such Usage. There is so much Sympathy and Tenderness in our very Composition, that before any one can bring himself to such an obdurate and uncompassionate Behaviour towards the wretched and afflicted, he must in some Degree change his very Nature; for which Reason, such a Disposition is commonly called *Inhumanity*, as if a Man could not take it up, but at the same Time he must commence a Creature of a different Nature from the rest of Mankind. And yet with this Kind of Temper it was, that those who were the Persecutors of the blessed *Jesus* looked upon him, when they had pierced him.

NOR was it only the rude and fierce Multitude who thus strove to increase those his Sufferings which they before had made so painful, but also they whose Education and Office should have rendered them less barbarous

## 58 SERMON III.

barous and more merciful; and even they whose own Pains should, one would have thought, have made them more tender and compassionate towards him, whom they should have regarded as a Fellow Sufferer, as a Sharer of the same Torment and Misery with themselves. Thus we are told at the 41<sup>st</sup>, 42<sup>d</sup>, and 43<sup>d</sup> Verses of the same Chapter that *the Chief Priests mocking him with the Scribes and Elders said, he saved others, himself he cannot save: If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the Cross and we will believe him. He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him: For he said, I am the Son of God.* With Insolence and Scorn they made use of those very Sufferings, which their own Wickedness and Malice had brought upon him, as a Proof that he was not the Son of God, nor the King of Israel. And thus in the

next

## SERMON III. 59

next Words we find that the very *Thieves also which were crucified with him cast the same in his Teeth*; they could find Respite enough from their own Pains to strive to add to his, and bitterly reproach him for innocently undergoing the same Torments, which they themselves most justly suffered for their Deserts.

BUT it is not this Sort of looking upon him that is intended in the Text; but the beholding him with a Regard very different from that with which he was look'd upon by his Enemies and Persecutors when he hung upon the Cross: And it was then chiefly that this Alteration should be observable, after, as the Prophet ZECHARIAH in the Place from which my Text is taken expresses it, God should have poured upon *the House of David and Inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of Grace and of Supplications*. Indeed before this  
upon



## 60 SERMON III.

upon seeing what immediately followed upon the Death of *Christ*, there wanted not some, who, as we may reasonably suppose, looked upon him with other Kind of Thoughts, than what they before had conceived and entertained of him. Thus we find MAT. xxvii. 54. that *the Centurion and they that were with him*, the very Persons, who had the principal Hand in his Crucifixion, and were in the most immediate Sense those that pierced him, when they saw what came to pass after it, *feared greatly, saying, truly this was the Son of God.* In so short a Time did this Prophecy begin to find its Accomplishment, and this Scripture to be fulfilled; and so soon did those who before had looked upon him with Scorn and Detestation and as unworthy of the Respect due to a *Man*, look upon him with Dread and with fearful Apprehensions of his Greatness as well as

with

## SERMON III. 61

with real Conviction of his Goodness; and they professed their Belief of his being, as he had before asserted himself to be without obtaining Credit among them, not only a truly righteous Man but also the Son of God. But if we proceed to consider, how they who had *pierced him* looked upon him after the Spirit of Grace was poured out upon them, we shall find them becoming apprehensive thereupon, not only of his Innocence and Excellency, but also of their own Wickedness and Guilt. To this Purpose, we read ACTS ii. 27. that soon after they had with so much Cruelty, and as they were willing to think, Policy, Justice and Zeal for the Honour of God, prosecuted him to Death as a Blasphemer and as one that might endanger their Peace and Safety, upon a serious Review of this their Proceeding occasioned by St. *Peter's* setting it before them in a true  
Light,

## 62 SERMON III.

Light, and bringing them again to *look upon him whom they had pierced, they were pricked in their Heart,* were filled with intense Grief, with deep Contrition for what they had done, and were in the greatest Perplexity, how they should escape the just Consequences of that prodigious Wickedness, which they were thoroughly convinced they had committed by crucifying the Lord of Life and Glory. And as by thus *looking upon him* they saw their Guilt and their Danger, so also they were to use the same Means to find a Remedy and Deliverance from one and the other: And the *Apostle* prescribes to them Repentance and being baptized in the Name of the Lord *Jesus*, as the Way to obtain *Remission*, and to *receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost*. How surprizing a Change must this be, which they found in their Thoughts concerning him *whom they*  
*had*



### SERMON III. 63

*had pierced:* They had just before judged it necessary to their Safety both with respect to God and Man to put him to Death, and they had accordingly done it with the utmost Violence and Cruelty; and yet in a short Time they find no Hopes of Safety but in *him*, and expect no Salvation, but through his Love and Goodness.

BUT still this Prophecy hath a more extensive Reach, concluding not only those who became penitent and Believers in him, but also such as continued most obstinate and incredulous: And there will come a Time, when these also shall, whether they will or no, once more *look upon him whom they have pierced*. If we consult the first Chapter of the Book of the *Revelation* at the seventh Verse, we shall find him spoken of *as coming with Clouds, and every Eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him:*

*And*

## 64 SERMON III.

*And all the Kindreds of the Earth shall wail because of him.* With what Confusion and Astonishment will those impious Wretches then be overwhelmed, when they shall see Him whom they once hanged upon a Cross, whose Body they tormented with Scourges, and whose Hands and Feet and Head and Side they pierced with deadly Wounds, *fit upon a Throne of Glory*, upon a Tribunal, before which they who were so ill Judges of his Cause will be worse Defenders of their own; when they can have no Hope, but in *His* Mercy, to whom they themselves would shew none, and from whom they have not, they cannot do any Thing to deserve any?

It will now at length be proper for us to consider *Who* they were, that *pierced Him*. Shall we say, that those who were the Actors and Executioners of that Cruelty are the only Persons meant by this Character?  
Certainly

# SERMON III. 65

Certainly no. Neither their Strength nor Malice could have prevailed so far: nor was the eternal Son of God likely to yield up himself to such bitter Sufferings merely for the satisfying of their barbarous and inhuman Pleasure, when he could easily have freed himself from their Hands. It was not the Power or Contrivance of some particular Men, but the Sins and Wickedness of all Mankind that caused his Death, that lifted him up to the Cross from the Earth, and *pierced* his Body and Soul upon it. He underwent all this, not because he could not have delivered himself from Death, but because they had not been delivered from Sin, from the Guilt and Punishment of their Offences against God, without it. It was not to satisfy the Malice of his Persecutors, but the Justice of God that he died, and though He only was *bruised, stricken, smitten of God*

F

and



## 66 SERMON III.

*and afflicted, yet it was for many, it was for us all, that his Soul was made an Offering for Sin.* So that in the Number of those who persecuted him, we shall find our selves: We shall find that our Sins as much as those of others had a Part in tormenting him, and gave as deep and deadly Wounds to him, as the Hands which more immediately struck and pierced him; and that if it had not been for the Wickedness of all Mankind, the Power of all Mankind could have done him no Hurt. If we are not sufficiently convinced of the Truth of this, let us consider what one of his own inspired Followers tells us in HEB. vi. 6. where speaking of Mens Sins and Impenitence, he assures us, that they not only have a Share in his past Sufferings, but that they renew and repeat them; they *crucify to themselves*  
*the*

Certainly

## SERMON III. 67

*the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open Shame.*

LET us then instead of abhorring and expressing our Detestation of the Wickedness of those who were Actors in tormenting our Lord, rather condemn and bewail our own Wickedness, which, whether we will understand it or not, was what bore a Part with them, and contributed to put him into their Hands, and to bring him to his Death. And since we among the rest have *pierced him*, let us also *look upon him whom we have pierced*: Let us consider him in the Condition to which our Sins brought him, hanging upon a Cross with his Body torn and his Life leaving it in extreamest Torments: Let us consider his Soul wounded with our Ingratitude, and more heavily oppressed and overwhelmed with the Apprehensions of that Anger of God, which that he might remove it from

## 68 SERMON III.

us he graciously condescended to take upon himself: Let us consider that as our Sins were the Cause of these his Sufferings, so his Sufferings, how bitter and terrible soever to him, are the Means of Salvation to us, and that *with his Stripes we are healed*: Let us with the convinced Centurion learn from the Effects of his Sufferings, that he was a *righteous Man, and that he was the Son of God*. And when we have thus *looked upon him* for Conviction, for Faith and for Repentance, let us further *look upon him* for Imitation and Direction: Let us learn Patience and Submission to the Will of God, from those amazing Proofs which he gave of them, in Circumstances of all others the most difficult to preserve them in: And let us learn Love and unbounded Charity to all Mankind, to the unthankful and to the Evil, from that which he exhibited the strongest



## SERMON III. 69

est Evidence of, by willingly dying for those, whose Wickedness was the Cause of all his Sufferings.

It is thus that we should *look upon him whom we have pierced*, and if we take these Views of him at the present, and behold him to these Purposes, we shall not need to *look upon him* hereafter when he *cometh in his Glory*, with Affright or Confusion, but we may expect Redemption and Salvation from his former Wounds, though we our selves had our Part in giving them. If we will now look upon his Passion and Death with Abhorrence of the Cause of them, with Love and Gratitude to him, with firm Trust in his Mercy, with sincere Imitation of his Example and Obedience to his Laws, we shall then look upon him with Comfort and Assurance, and escaping the Punishment of our own Wickedness which he hath sustained

# 70 SERMON III.

in our stead, we shall be made  
Partakers of the eternal Happiness  
and Glory, which he hath purcha-  
sed for us.



SERMON

( 71 )



SERMON IV.  
Preached on GOOD-FRIDAY.

\*\*\*\*\*

HEB. X. Part of the 10<sup>th</sup> Verse.

*— We are sanctified through the  
Offering of the Body of Christ once  
for all.*



IN this Epistle the Author  
of it uses a Manner of ar-  
guing peculiarly fitted for  
the *Hebrews* to whom it  
was written. He proceeds altoge-  
ther upon such Grounds, and makes



## 72 S E R M O N IV

his Deductions from such Principles, as he knew they allowed to be good; and proposes to their Belief and Observance, the Mysteries and Precepts of the Gospel, by shewing how they were figured out in the Law, of which they were the Reality, the Substance and Perfection. This especially appears in his laying before them the Doctrine of that Satisfaction and Propitiation for the Sins of the World, which was made by the Sacrifice of *Jesus Christ*, the Lamb of God, who was cut off for the Transgression of his People. This, I say, was proposed to the *Jews* in a Manner very proper and likely to convince them by the Writer of this Epistle, while he pointed out to them the exact Agreement, which there was between this Sacrifice of *Christ*, and those Types and Figures of it, which they had been acquainted with in the Sacrifices instituted in the

## SERMON IV. 73

the Law of God delivered to them by *Moses*.

To some Kind of Reasoners this Doctrine of Satisfaction for the Sins of Mankind by the Blood of *Christ* might perhaps appear very inconceivable, they might find it difficult to apprehend, how the Sufferings of one Person should be a Propitiation for the Sins of others; how one Man's Death should free others from Guilt and Punishment; where the Efficacy was to be found, which produced this, and what Dependence one of these Things could possibly have upon the other. But to the *Hebrews*, to those who had *the Law for their School-Master to bring them unto Christ*, this was very plain and easy to be understood. It was no new or unintelligible Thing to them to be told, that *Jesus Christ* by offering his Body as a Sacrifice for their Sins, had *sanctified* them, had cleansed them from  
their

## 74 SERMON IV.

their Guilt, and rendred them acceptable to, or reconciled them with God. They had all along expected such an Effect, from the Sacrifices they had constantly offered according to the Law, nay so necessary did they account those Offerings for Sin, as that without *shedding the Blood* of them they looked for *no Remission*. To these therefore, who believed, that *the Blood of Bulls and of Goats and the Ashes of an Heifer sprinkling the unclean could sanctify to the purifying of the Flesh*, it would appear very credible that *the Blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without Spot to God*, should much more effectually purge their Consciences from dead Works, to serve the living God. HEB. x. 14.

THAT we may be the better able to understand the Strength of the arguing which is here used, it may be proper to enquire

I. INTO



## SERMON IV. 75

I. INTO some Particulars concerning the Satisfaction and Expiation made for Sin by the Sacrifices under the Law of *Moses*, which were Types and Figures of the Sacrifice of *Christ*. And

II. How those Types and Figures were verified and fulfilled in *Christ* their Antitype and Substance.

I. *First*, I AM to enquire into some Particulars concerning the Satisfaction and Expiation made for Sin by the Sacrifices under the Law of *Moses*, which were Types and Figures of the Sacrifice of *Christ*.

THAT I may obviate any Misconstruction, that the Particulars I shall mention may be thought deserving of our Notice and Attention, I desire you to observe with me, that they were all of God's own Institution

## 76 SERMON IV.

tion and exprefs immediate Appointment, and therefore fuch as were highly agreeable to Wifdom and Goodnefs, whether we be able to difcern that Agreement or not.

1. THE *First* Particular I fhall take Notice of with relation to Sacrifices for Sin is, that the Victims, the living Creatures to be offered muft be killed. This appears by all the Directions which are given in the *Levitical* Law concerning Sin-offerings: It was *the Life and Blood of the Sacrifice, that made Atonement for the Soul of him* who offered it, as we find *LEV. xvii. 11.* it was with *Blood*, as we find *HEB. ix. 22.* that *almost all Things are by the Law purged, and without Shedding of Blood is no Remiffion.*

2. THE Victim that was killed was accounted to bear upon itfelf as the Punifhment, fo the Sin and Guilt of the Perfon for whom it was offered, in fuch a Manner, as that he fhould be

## SERMON IV. 77

be cleansed from it, and an Atonement made to God for him; or, according to the Language of my Text, he should be *sanctified by his Offering*, he should be freed from that Stain of Guilt, which otherwise polluted him, and made him unfit to appear before God. To this Purpose we find expressly at LEV. x. 17. that God *had given the Sin-offering to bear the Iniquity of the Congregation, to make Atonement for them before the Lord.*

3. THE last Particular I shall observe with relation to the *Sin-offerings* appointed by the Law, shall be this, that the Blood of the slain Sacrifices was carried by the Priest to the Altar of God and there offered to Him for an Atonement or Satisfaction for the Sin of the Sacrificer, and that once in a Year upon the great Day of Expiation, in which both the Pollutions of the holy Place itself and of the Priests and all the People were confessed,



## 78 SERMON IV.

fessed, and Sacrifices offered to atone for them, and to sanctify them, the High-Priest alone, and that once only, carried of the Blood of the slain Sacrifice within the Veil into the holiest of all, and therewith made the Atonement to God for his own Sins and those of all the People. These Particulars we find at large in LEVITICUS, and especially in the xvi<sup>th</sup> Chapter of that Book. Thus much may suffice for the several Particulars I have taken Notice of concernig the Satisfaction and Propitiation made for Sin by the Sacrifices under the Law of *Moses*.

PERHAPS these Things may appear strangely to Men, who in every Thing require the Reason for which it is appointed, the Congruity and Fitness of it, and how it comes to be necessary to, and attended with such Effects as are ascribed to it. Such Men may and do make it a  
Question

## SERMON IV. 79

Question and take the Negative Side of it, how the Blood of slain Beasts should have any Effect for taking away the Guilt of sinful Men? how one of these can represent or be interested in the other? and how such particular Usages and Ceremonies should become so powerful and necessary? It ought to be a sufficient Answer to all this, what hath been already observed, that these Things, how unreasonable or unintelligible soever they may appear to them to be, were the immediate and express Institutions of the God of infinite Wisdom, Goodness and Truth, who knew the Reason and Propriety of what he required, though they do not; and whose Mercy it will better become Men to adore and to be thankful for, in that he was pleased to provide them any Means of making Atonement to him for their Transgressions of his Laws, than to  
cavil

## 80 SERMON IV.

cavil at, dispute against, and endeavour to disable such Methods as he hath thought good to prescribe for that End. One Reason however of these Appointments, and that a very sufficient one, is that which is made so much use of in this Epistle to the *Hebrews*; namely to leave no room to doubt of the Efficacy of the Sacrifice of *Christ*, by setting them to compute, that if the Blood of slain Beasts could be of any Effect for the expiating of some Sins against God, not only of particular Men, but of a whole Nation, much more the Blood of *Christ* should suffice to take away all Sin, to redeem all Mankind, and to *sanctify them through the Offering of his Body once for all*. With this View, and to prepare Men the more readily to receive this great Mystery of Godliness, this Depth of the Riches of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God, the Atonement made  
to



## SERMON IV. 81

to him for all Men by the Blood of that immaculate Lamb that was slain to take away the Sins of the World, we may well conclude, that it pleased God to institute the Rite of sacrificing; and to allow to it such a Virtue for the putting away of Sin from the very first Age of the World, and to permit it to become so universal and perpetual before the coming of our Lord in the Flesh: For sacrificing and the Notion of being cleansed from Guilt and Pollution by it, was not confined to the *Jews*, but was received by the rest of Mankind, as might easily be shewn, were it necessary. And this brings me in the

II. *Second* Place to enquire how the Types and Figures of the Law of *Moses* were verified and fulfilled in *Jesus Christ*, their Antitype and Substance.

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THESE

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THESE Things which the Law appointed were, as we are told COLoss. ii. 17. *A Shadow of Things to come; but the Body, the Reality of them is of Christ.* The Law as we find HEB. x. 1. *having a Shadow of good Things to come could never with those Sacrifices which they offered Year by Year continually make the Comers thereunto perfect; and those Sins which were atoned for by the Sacrifices of it were remitted for the Merit of that Sacrifice, which they were but Shadows of, that of the Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World,* REv. xiii. 8. With respect to this Expiation and Atonement made with his own Blood, with the Death of his Body, we may collect the Reason of its being appointed, that the Beasts offered for Sin-offerings in the Law of *Moses* should be slain; that thus by their Death in order to the putting away some Sins, which was the Shadow

## SERMON IV. 83

dow, the Death of *Christ Jesus* for the taking away the Sins of the World, which is the Substance, might be figured out.

AGAIN: As in the Type, the Sacrifice is said to *bear the Sin* of him who offered it; so *Christ* the Antitype is said to *bear* the Sins and Iniquities of the many Transgressors, for whom his Life was made a Sacrifice, and *who were healed with his Stripes*.

FURTHER; as in the Figure the legal Sacrifices for Sin, the Blood of the slain Beasts was carried by the Priests and sprinkled upon the Altar of God, and on the Day of the Expiation for the Priests themselves and the whole People for the Year, the High-Priest alone carried the sacrificed Blood into the holiest Place of all within the Veil, and sprinkled it upon the Mercy Seat; by which Ceremonies was understood the offering it to God, so, as we find,



## 84 SERMON IV.

HEB. ix. 11, 12, 14. *Christ being come an High-Priest of good Things to come, entred not into the holy Places made with Hands, which are the Figures of the true, nor by the Blood of Goats and Calves, but into Heaven it self with his own Blood to appear in the Presence of God for us.* The Time will not permit me, neither is it necessary at once to reckon up the many and as some may account them even minute Particulars, in which the legal Sacrifices and the Ceremonies that attended them were Figures of, correspondent with and verified in their great Antitype and Substance the Sacrifice of *Christ* for the Sins of the World, whether we consider the High-Priest, the Victim itself, or the Time and the Place of offering it: What hath been observed already will, I hope, be sufficient to support some Inferences, which I shall now apply myself to make, and so conclude.

*First,*

## SERMON IV. 85

*First*, I shall infer the Truth and Certainty of this Doctrine, that *Christ* died to make Satisfaction and Atonement to God for the Sins of the World.

THIS is a Truth which many Men, and in particular the *Socinians*, make no Difficulty to deny, because they cannot discern the Reasonableness of the Sufferings of one Person being any Satisfaction for the Sins of others. But can they better apprehend, how those Sacrifices, which God instituted on Purpose to make Atonement for Sin, could have that Effect, and the Sacrifice of the Blood of *Christ* be without it? Can they apprehend, how Sin-offerings could be Types, Figures and Shadows of the Sacrifice of *Christ*, and yet that the Sacrifice of *Christ*, which was the Substance, should not have any Effect resembling and exceeding the Effects of them? Can they apprehend, why *Christ*

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should

## 86 · S E R M O N IV.

should suffer at all, much less should in so dreadful a Degree suffer the Loss of his Blood, his human Life for nothing? as he must have done, unless he had suffered for the Sins of other Men, for he had no Sin of his own to suffer for; and we are not to imagine that God would so grievously afflict so innocent and excellent a Person (were we to regard him only as a *Man*) without an indisputable Necessity in order to the attaining some great good End, which could not otherwise be attained: And let them assign any other Purpose besides that of taking away the Sins of Mankind, for which there could be such a Necessity, or that was any Way worth purchasing at so dear a Rate.

*Secondly*, This Truth being established, that *Jesus Christ* by the Offering of his own Body hath made himself the Propitiation for our Sins and for  
the



## SERMON IV. 87

the Sins of the whole World, hereby we are encouraged, as we find it inferred from this very Consideration in the 22<sup>d</sup> Verse of this x<sup>th</sup> Chapter, *to draw near to God with a true Heart, in full Assurance of Faith, having our Hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience, and our Bodies washt with pure Water.* We have sufficient Reason to be assured, that God is reconciled to us in *Christ*, and therefore we need not fear to *draw near* to him, who has vouchsafed so mercifully to draw near to us. We ought to put our Trust in him, and to give up ourselves to his Service without doubting his Favour to us, and his Acceptance of our Duty. An assured Faith is to be entertained by us; and this will spring from our Knowledge of what *Jesus Christ* hath done and suffered for our Redemption. When we know who it is that undertakes to save us, what Sacrifice he offered to

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purchase

## 88 SERMON IV.

purchase the Remission of our Sins, and how sufficient the Merits of it are, we shall have nothing left that can diminish or abate from the fullest Assurance of Faith in us, nothing to create any Distrust in us, whether Salvation is obtained for us or not. This Faith which we shall find to be thus reasonable and assured, which is the Principle of the Christian Life, and from whence all the Duty and Service which we pay to God doth spring, must be accompanied with a *true Heart*; it must be sincere; it must be real, not pretended; active and effectual, not indolent and lifeless: It must not be a mere Assent of our Minds to the Gospel of *Christ*, but it must be animated by a Practice worthy of, and correspondent to the Truths contained in it, into the open Profession of which we were admitted by Baptism, *having our Hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience and our Bodies*

*dies*

## SERMON IV. 89

*dies washed with pure Water, the Laver of Spiritual Regeneration.*

*Thirdly, As from the Consideration of Christ's Satisfaction for our Sins by the Offering of his Body once for all, we are encouraged to draw near to God with a true Heart in full Assurance of Faith, so in the 23<sup>d</sup> Verse of this Chapter the Apostle exhorts us to hold fast the Profession of our Faith without wavering: For he is faithful that promised. We are to hold fast the Profession of our Faith; for there will not be wanting Temptations to us to let it go. Our Lusts will suggest to us that it is unreasonable, and will tend to our Disadvantage to adhere to it: The Disputers of this World will undertake to prove to us, that it is false, groundless and absurd: And our own Wickedness or Weakness will furnish us with Doubts and Scruples concerning it. All these will attempt to prevail upon*



## 90 SERMON IV.

upon us to give up our Persuasion of the Truth of what we are to ground our faith upon, and by that Means to make us let go the *Hope* (as the original Word signifies) which we ought to have in *Christ Jesus*. And if the inward Persuasion may be thus assaulted, much less will the outward Profession be free from Danger. They to whom this Epistle was addressed, had Reason enough to be afraid of Danger, when Persecution, Torment and Death were the certain and immediate Consequences of their openly professing what they inwardly believed. But did that Danger deter them from so doing? did they deny their Lord *Jesus Christ*, or were they ashamed of his Cross, or afraid to take it up before Men? No. They openly proclaimed his Truths in Opposition to the beloved establish'd Errors of the World; boldly asserted his Divine Honour in Defiance of the usurped

## SERMON IV. 91

usurped Worship of the Devil; and cheerfully conformed their Lives to, suffered Death in Defence of his Religion, notwithstanding all the Strugglings and Resistances of the Flesh. Let not less Danger have more Power over us to deprive us of our Profession, than the terrible Conflicts which they underwent, and the fiery Trials which they suffered, had over them.

AGAIN: We are to hold fast the Profession of our Faith *without wavering*: We must not fluctuate in Doubt; we must not be in suspense between this World and the other; it ought not to be an indifferent Thing to us, what we believe and by consequence what we profess. Unless we use our own best Endeavours and attend to that Instruction which God provides for us in his Word and by his Servants, with Meekness and with Diligence, unless we sincerely strive  
to

## 92 SERMON IV.

to learn the Truth and thoroughly resolve to submit to it, we shall never be able to come to the Knowledge of it, and for Want of that Knowledge to fix and determine us, shall always be in an unsettled Condition, liable to be *tossed to and fro, and carried about by every Wind of Doctrine by the Sleight of Men and cunning Craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive*, EPH. iv. 14. and to be so miserably deluded, as to *believe a Lie*, to receive that for saving Truth, which is in reality destructive Error. It is not for nothing that St. Paul 2 TIM. iii. 7. speaking expressly of such as are unsettled in their Belief, such as have no fixt Principles or *sound Form of Words* to be a Rule of their Faith, saith, that they are indeed *ever learning but never able to come to the Knowledge of the Truth*. They perhaps may please themselves with these Reflexions, that they are not Bigots, that



## SERMON IV. 93

that they give not a blind Assent or implicitly take Things upon Trust from others; that they are free and unprejudiced in their Searches after Truth, and that they are willing to allow to all Men the same Liberty in forming their Opinions, which they assert and use for themselves. But are we then still and always to be in the dark, and at a loss to know what it is that we are to believe, after having so long had the Revelation of God, and the Doctrine and Example of *Jesus Christ* to enlighten and inform us? Must we notwithstanding all this, be ever in Uncertainty and unable to attain to any true Knowledge? must we reckon it no Privilege, no Preheminence above the rest of the unconverted World, that we are called by the Name of *Christ* and are the Members of his mystical Body and in a covenant of Salvation with God through him? We can have no  
reafo-

## 94 SERMON IV.

reasonable Hope of future Happiness, and by certain Consequence no sufficient Ground for present Comfort and Peace, unless we place it upon our Faith in *Christ Jesus*, upon our Assurance of that Satisfaction which by his Blood he hath made for our Sins: The Truths upon which this Faith is grounded are certain, clearly and indisputably attested, and by every proper Evidence and persuasive Motive recommended to us: We must therefore be fixt, determined, establish'd in the Belief and Profession of them: Our *Hope* (in another Meaning of the original Word) must *be without Wavering*, always steady and aspiring towards Heaven, not declining towards or shaken by any of the Allurements or Terrors of this present evil World.

THAT we may ever *without wavering bold fast the Profession of our Faith* and the Hope which depends  
upon

## SERMON IV. 95

upon it, we must remember, upon what Foundation it is built, upon the Truth and Veracity of God himself, *for he is faithful that promised.* He it is who has given us a *Promise*, that he will pardon our Sins for his Son's Sake and bestow upon us an Inheritance in his Kingdom; and we can have no Reason to be in any Doubt concerning the Certainty of it. All other Things, how great and excellent soever, may alter, may fail, may disappoint our Hopes and most reasonable Expectations: But the Promise of God, like himself, endureth for ever; there is no Variableness, no Shadow of turning in it. Having therefore this Promise, let us uniformly and constantly adhere to this Christian Profession; let us not suffer ourselves to be prevailed upon to deny and abandon it, by false Arguments and *Oppositions of Science falsely so called*, i TIM. vi. 20. but above all,  
as



## 96 SERMON IV.

as what we are most in Danger of losing it by, let us take care not to live unworthily of it; for whether any thing else be able to bereave us of it or not, our own Wickedness is certainly so; is able to make us wish that our Religion may not be true, and to deprive us of the Love of God, and provoke him to withdraw his Grace from us, and to leave us to bewilder and lose ourselves in Error and Infidelity. For the more effectual Prevention of this, let us, (as we are taught in the next Verse) in the

*Fourth Place consider one another to provoke unto Love and good Works;* apply our selves and stir up others to the Practice of Virtue, and particularly to Works of Christian Charity, and ever esteem it an important Branch of our Duty to avoid with the utmost Care every thing that may tend to dissolve, to lessen or impair that Love  
which

# SERMON IV. 97

which we find our selves called upon by the Example of *Christ*, who loved us as to give himself to die for us, to preserve and exercise towards one another. Let us particularly take heed (as we are taught in the following Verse) *not to forsake the assembling ourselves together to worship and serve God, as the Manner of some is, but exhort one another to the good Purposes I have been mentioning, to Constancy in our Faith towards God, and in professing and maintaining that Faith, and to true sincere Christian Charity and Love towards all Mankind; and as the best Proof we can give thereof, let us offer up our Prayers to God for the Assistance of his Grace, that we may live in the true Faith which he has called us to, and in full Assurance of his Mercy and Love, and Dependence upon the Promises he has given us in his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and that he*

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would

# 98 SERMON IV.

would extend this Faith to the rest of Mankind, would bring those to it who have not received it, and call back those who have fallen from it; that so we may be all united under one Head, *Jesus Christ*, who hath purchased us all with his own Blood, by which we are *sanctified* in this Life, and shall be *made perfect* in the Life to come.

but what one another to  
Purposes I have been mentioning, to  
Consistency in our Faith towards God,  
and in professing and maintaining  
that Faith, and to the sincere Chris-  
tian Charity towards all  
Mankind. For proof we  
can give of the  
Favour of God, and  
his Grace, and  
true Faith, and  
and in full Assurance of his Mercy  
and Love, and Dependence upon the  
Promises he has given us in his son  
Jesus Christ our Lord; and that he  
would



SERMON





# SERMON V.

Preached on EASTER-DAY.

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I COR. XV. 56, 57.

*The Sting of Death is Sin, and the  
Strength of Sin is the Law.*

*But Thanks be to God, which giveth  
us the Victory through our Lord Je-  
sus Christ.*



WITHOUT standing to give  
an Account of the Con-  
text, I shall consider these  
important Words as they  
make up a full Sentence or Period of

H 2 themselves ;

## 100 SERMON V.

themselves; and in order to the doing of this in such a Manner as may be useful, I shall in the

I. *First* Place, speak of Death, and enquire into the Reason why Sin is said to be its Sting.

II. I shall shew upon what account it is here said, that the Law is the Strength of Sin. And

III. I shall consider the Reason of the Apostle's Thanksgiving in the latter Verse of my Text.

I. *First*, I AM to speak of Death and enquire into the Reason why Sin is said to be its Sting.

I SHALL take Notice of two Senses of this Word in Scripture, as proper for our present Consideration. The first is, when it is made use of to signify the Dissolution of the Union between the Soul and Body of Man, the End of his natural Life and Continuance

## SERMON V. 101

tinuance in this World. And were there no more than this in Death, it would not be very easy to assign any tolerable, much less sufficient Reason for that invincible Fear and Abhorrence of it, which almost all Men are subject to and enslaved by. There is indeed in every Thing that hath Life, an Aversion to whatsoever is destructive to its Being; but this is to be resolved rather into Instinct than Reason, since it may be observed to be as strong in the animal, as in the rational Creation. But Man who is endued with Reason should be able, not only to know that he is afraid of Death, but also why, and upon what account it is terrible to him. It is not because the Life which it puts an End to is so happy, entertaining and agreeable, that he conceives so great an Abhorrence of it: Pains, Diseases, Disappointments and Miseries of innumerable Sorts incident



## 102 SERMON V.

to Mankind concur to prove, that this cannot be the true Reason of a Mans being unwilling and afraid to part with Life. Nor is it the Pain and Torment which he apprehends to be in the Separation of the Soul and Body, that makes him tremble at and shrink back with so much Horror from it. For were this to be given for the Cause that Men feared Death, it would hold much more strongly for a Fear of Living, since it is not Death but Life that makes them liable to, and capable of Pain. Can we admit this for a just Cause of his fearing Death, who hath scarce any other Proof of his being alive, but that he is in Anguish and Misery, who hath no Relish of any Pleasure; whose Mind is sunk and broken with the Load and Pressure of a long continued Succession of still increasing Troubles; and not so much as the Hope of any Alleviation or Intermis-  
sion

## S E R M O N V. 103

sion of them left to support him under them; and whose Body is rack'd and confined by acute, yet long-lived Diseases, or bowed down toward the Dust of Death, and disabled to all Intents for the finding any Enjoyment in Life, by the certain and irreparable Decays which extreme old Age causes in it? Can, I say, the Painfulness of Death to such a one be so terrible, as the Rest and Repose of it is desirous? or can it be supposed, that he who hath passed so many Stages of Affliction and Torment will be afraid to enter upon this last, which he knows will bring him to a secure Shelter from them all. And yet however it ought to be in Reason, in Fact it is thus. The Miseries of Life for the most part are so far from making Men willing to find Rest from them in Death, that on the contrary they chuse to increase the Number of their Pains and Sufferings

## 104 SERMON V.

ferings so they may but avoid the End of them, and nothing is so nauseous, so terrible and so grievous to be born, but Men can reconcile themselves to it when it is proposed to them as conducive to this Purpose.

My Meaning in speaking thus would be very much misunderstood, should any one imagine that from what hath been said it follows, that a Man is at Liberty to chuse whether he will make use of such painful Means for the preserving of his Life or not, or that it will be more adviseable for him to seek Death than to bear the Miseries of Life. God, who hath given Life to Man, hath also commanded him to keep it, till he himself is pleased to resume his Gift: and it is the Duty of him to whose Trust any thing is committed, to use all the Means he can to preserve it, till he who committed it to him doth again require it at his Hands;



## SERMON V. 105

Hands; or dismiss him from any further Charge of it. All that hath been said to this Argument is intended only as a Proof, and certainly it is a very sufficient one, that it cannot therefore be the Apprehensions of the Painfulness of Death which renders it terrible to Men, because if their Fear were the Effect of that, they must be driven from it by the stronger Apprehensions of greater Pains in Life, than those of Death could be imagined by them to be.

WHAT Cause then can be assigned for this Dread and Fear, which Men are so generally and strongly possessed with, if neither the Love of Life nor the Pain of Death be considerable enough to occasion it; if neither Life be so happy, as to make us afraid to part with it, nor Death so painful, as to equal the Miseries we must undergo in striving to avoid it? It cannot be, because it is an extraordinary,

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ordinary, unusual Thing, or surprising and unexpected, which are Circumstances that render Danger more frightful and terrible: On the contrary the Experience of all the former Ages, and of every Day in our own, may serve to render it familiar to us, and prepare us to obey that Law, which we see none are exempted from.

THESE Considerations one should think are not without some Weight, and do not want Reasons to make Men less afraid of Death and to disarm it of its Force. We every Day see, that this King of Terrors still preserves his Power and maintains his Empire over all Mankind: Why then cannot Men argue themselves into Courage enough to approach him without Horror? and why are the Thoughts of dying as astonishing to him who finds himself near it, as they could have been if no one had ever

## S E R M O N V. 107

ever died before him? The only true and sufficient Reason of all this is in my Text assigned by the Apostle, in which he tells us, that *Sin is the Sting of Death*, the Cause of its being terrible and painful to us.

IN the Beginning of this Discourse I said I should take Notice of two Significations in which the Scripture uses this Word *Death*, one of which I have already spoken to, namely as it intends the Dissolution of the Union between the Soul and Body, the End of the natural Life of Man. The other Signification of this Word occurreth frequently, and especially in the New Testament, and hath Regard to that State of endless Torment which the just Vengeance of God hath prepared in the World to come, for the Punishment of such, as have by their Sins offended him, and taken no Care to appease his Anger and to regain his Favour. Expre-  
ly



## 108 SERMON V.

ly to this Purpose we are told in  
 RE V. xii. 8. that *the fearful, and un-*  
*believing, and the abominable, and*  
*Murderers, and Whoremongers, and*  
*Sorcerers, and Idolaters, and all Li-*  
*ars, shall have their Part in the Lake*  
*which burneth with Fire and Brim-*  
*stone: Which is the second Death.*  
 And now we need not be at a loss for  
 the Reason upon which Men ground  
 their Fears of the *first Death*: It is  
 with more than Cause enough that  
 they are afraid of the *first*, who are  
 conscious to themselves that their  
 Sins deserve the *second*; nor can we  
 imagine, how he can be content to  
 lay down his Life, however miserable  
 it may be, who hath Reason to ex-  
 pect much greater, yea endless Mi-  
 sery, as soon as he is delivered over  
 to Death and carried to Judgment.  
 So true it is, which the Apostle tells  
 us, that *Sin is the Sting of Death*;  
 that it makes Men expect it with  
 Horror,

## SERMON IV. 109

Honor, and undergo it with all the Marks of Reluctance and ghastly Apprehensions. What else can we imagine it to be, that in that dreadful Moment filleth the departing Soul with discouraging Fears, and renders it regardless of the Counsels and Comforts of Religion and of the Tears of weeping Friends, and intent only upon its own dreadful Expectations, but the then no longer to be silenced Reproaches which the awakened Sense of its Wickedness loads it with, and covers it with Confusion by? But in considering *Sin as the Sting of Death*, let us put the Case to the utmost Disadvantage, and suppose a Man to be stupid and wicked enough to be altogether an Infidel as to the Matter of future Judgment and Vengeance for Sin; that he has so entirely stifled the Belief of it, as no longer to be troubled with any Fears or Apprehensions concerning it: A

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## 110 SERMON IV

Frame of Mind, which some have been foolish enough to labour long and hard for, that thereby they may the better reconcile a vicious Life to their Pretences to Reason. All this notwithstanding, the Apostle's Position will still hold good, and even this Sin of Infidelity will be to them *the Sting of Death*. For they cannot divest themselves of the Fears of Misery without foregoing at the same Time all Hopes of future Happiness: And therefore they have nothing to support them against the Terrors of Death, which are not small, if we should with them look upon it as Annihilation, and entire final Destruction of our Being.

THE Desires and Apprehensions of Immortality are more closely and essentially united to our Souls, than not to make any Doubts concerning it, much more any Persuasion to the contrary very distasteful and troublesome



## SERMON V. III

some to us. Nor is our Being of so small Value or Dignity, as to allow us to entertain without Horror, Thoughts of being altogether deprived of it: So that, besides the fordid and ignoble Spirit it argues that Man to be of, who can be content to sleep to all Eternity, with his fellow Beasts that perish, rather than to aspire though with hard Labour to endless Glory and Felicity, and to the Society of the best and most excellent of Beings; and besides the Uncertainty which a Man must always remain in, who strives to force the Belief of these Things out of his Soul; admitting, that a Man could free himself from Apprehensions of a future State, his Death must needs be very uncomfortable, who must look upon it as the utter End of his whole Being; of all his Happiness as well as Misery, of all his Hopes as well as Fears, and as that which with himself must  
put

## 112 SERMON V.

put a Period to all his Thoughts and Expectations. I shall not indeed with some pretend that Existence, though in eternal Misery, is what a Man can more easily bear the Expectation of, than of Annihilation. It may be sufficiently troublesome; and will certainly prove so; that next to eternal Torments the final Destruction of his Being is the worst Thing that can befall a Man; and at the same Time is the best that he hath to hope for.

Thus doth it appear that *Sin is the Sting of Death*, whether Men consider Death as the Way to Judgment in a future State, or they look upon it as the entire Destruction of their Nature. I shall add to this another Observation, and that is, that as *Sin is the Sting of the first*, so we well conclude it to be of the *second Death* also; and that Remorse for their Ingratitude to God, and for the Want of

provi-

## SERMON V. 113

providing better for their own Happiness will serve for a perpetual and painful Sting to that *Worm that dieth not*, and will be no small Part of that Punishment which wicked Men must undergo to all Eternity.

I now proceed to shew in the

II. *Second Place* upon what account it is said in my Text, that *the Law is the Strength of Sin*.

It seems to sound very strangely, that the Law, which was given to forbid, and thereby as much as might be to prevent, or to destroy Sin, should be said to be the Strength of it: But there are other Things, which this Apostle saith concerning the Law, which sound altogether as strangely as this, and which may in some Measure serve to explain it. For Example; in Rom. vii. 8. we are told that *without the Law, Sin was dead*: And this will be very intelligible, if we

I read



## 114 SERMON V.

read the Context with it, from whence we may collect, that the perverse Pride of human Nature, while uncorrected by the Grace of God is such, that it is irritated by the imposing of any Command upon it, and immediately finds in itself a Tendency to go contrary to whatsoever is enjoined to it: So that the Things which were before indifferent to a Man, when once commanded and required of him become Grievances, and it is not without Compulsion that he is brought to the Performance of them. Again; in the 7<sup>th</sup> Verse of the same Chapter the Apostle saith, *I had not known Sin, but by the Law*: The Meaning of which is, that the Law being a Revelation of Man's Duty and of the Will of God, doth more effectually teach Men to know what is sinful, than they would have been able to have known without its Information: The natural Consequence of which

# SERMON V. 115

which is, that the Law by rendring the Duty of Men more certain and practicable, renders their Neglect of it more criminal and inexcusable, than it would otherwise have been: It makes the Sin greater and the Provocation more heinous, than it would have been if committed against a less Degree of Knowledge than the Law brings with it. And in this as well as the other respect it may properly be said, that *the Law is the Strength of Sin.*

It may be further observed, that by *the Law* we may understand not only the Law of *Moses* revealed expressly by God, or the Law of the Flesh which the Apostle speaks of Rom. vii. 23. the obstinate Tendency of depraved Nature against the Commandments of God, but also the Law of Reason spoken of by the Apostle Rom. ii. 15. *the Law of God written in the Hearts of Men.* It is Dis-

I 2

obedience

## 116 SERMON V.

obedience to the Laws of God whether natural or revealed, which is styled *Sin*: On which account it is that the Apostle saith, ROM. iv. 15. that *where no Law is, there is no Transgression*: Not that there is not an essential Difference between Good and Evil, but because that Difference would not be so sufficiently known to Men, as to make their not observing it so criminal and sinful, did not the Law of God reveal it to them. Thus is *the Law the Strength of Sin*, as it irritates our Pride of Nature, and we are provoked thereby to disobey the Law, and as it aggravates and renders more sinful our Disobedience.

THERE is still another Reason, for which *the Law is the Strength of Sin*, more especially as *Sin is the Sting of Death*; which is, that though the Law shews us wherein we offend God, and thereupon represents his Anger to  
us,



## SERMON V. 117

us, and burdens our Souls with the Fears of it, and though it is sufficient to convict all Mankind of Guilt and to fill them with Apprehensions of Punishment, yet it is altogether unable to teach them how to appease the Anger of God when provoked, or to obtain his Mercy, when we have exposed ourselves to his Justice. And certainly this cannot but add Strength to that *Sting of Death* which *Sin* carries with it; that we can clearly see our Guilt and the Punishment due to it, but cannot discover by the Law, either of *Moses* or of Nature, any certain Way to free our selves from the one or the other. It is in this important Respect that both the natural and *Mosaick* Religion are insufficient to fortify us against the Fears of Death: They neither of them prescribe a sure Method of regaining the Favour of God after we have offended him, and thereby of escaping the future

I 3      Effects

## 118 SERMON V.

Effects of his incensed Justice. But it hath pleased God by the Revelation of a better Law to enable us to overcome this Difficulty: Which brings me in the

III. *Third* and last Place to consider the Reason of the Apostle's Thanksgiving in the Close of my Text. He *thanks God for the Victory he hath given us over Death and Sin,* and every Thing that can render them hurtful and terrible to us. This *Victory* the Apostle tells us is the Gift of God; and a short Consideration will serve to make us acknowledge, that if we do at all obtain this Victory, we must do it by the Grace of God, since our own Strength is utterly unequal to, and insufficient for so difficult a Performance. We are further informed of the Means by which this Gift of God is obtained; it is *through Jesus Christ our Lord.* It

is

## SERMON V. 119

is through him that we are freed from Guilt and Sin, his Merits and Sufferings having satisfied the Justice of God and obtained Mercy for us; so that the *Sing*, the most noxious and terrible Weapon of Death is taken from it, and we may with more firmness and Constancy abide its Approach than otherwise we could have done. It is by the Promises of *Jesus Christ* that we are assured of Happiness after Death; and thereby may be encouraged to meet it not only with Resolution, but with Desire and Pleasure, as the Guide to better Enjoyments, than those which it takes us from. We also learn this from our blessed Lord's Example: We have this Confirmation given to our Faith, that he hath promised nothing to us more than what he hath already made good to our Nature. Doth he promise to raise us from the Dead, and to advance us to a



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Life of Immortality and Glory? it is no more than what he hath done in his own Person, and thereupon we may be assured he will do it in ours. Let us therefore since it is only in and through him that we can obtain this Victory, endeavour by his Directions and Example and by Faith in his Merits to seek after it: Let us imitate his Goodness, and obey his Commands, and constantly pray to him for his Assistance. So shall we neither be discouraged at the Approach of Death, nor affrighted at the Thoughts of Judgment; but even then shall continue *stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord*; and finally receiving the Reward of *our Labours in the Lord*, shall find by blessed Experience that they have *not been in vain*.

SERMON



# SERMON VI.

Preached on WHIT-SUNDAY.



I COR. XIII. 4, 5, 6.

*Now there are Diversities of Gifts,  
but the same Spirit.*

*And there are Differences of Admini-  
strations, but the same Lord.*

*And there are Diversities of Operati-  
ons, but it is the same God, which  
worketh all in all.*



**N** the second Verse of this  
Chapter the Apostle put-  
teth the *Corinthians* in  
mind of the Condition  
they were in, before they received  
the

## 122 SERMON VI.

the Gospel of *Christ*. *Ye know*, saith he, *that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto dumb Idols, even as ye were led.* And in the following Verses, among which are those in my Text, he informs them by what Means they were brought out of Heathenism and Idolatry into the Belief and Profession of Christianity, namely by the Power and Grace of the Holy Ghost. He gives them to understand in the third Verse, as that *no Man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed*, so likewise that no one can at first receive and profess the Faith of *Christ*, *no Man can say that Jesus is the Lord*, can acknowledge his Divinity and Sovereignty, but by the same Spirit, *but by the Holy Ghost*.

BEFORE I proceed to the Particulars mentioned in my Text, I shall observe two Things which deserve to be well considered. One is, that the ascribing to our blessed Lord and Saviour



## SERMON VI. 123

Saviour his due Honour in saying *that Jesus is the Lord*, the Apostle places the whole of the Christian Religion, and the derogating from this Profession he declares to be a renouncing of the Christian Faith. Nor is it without sufficient Reason, as well as full Authority, that he doth this; for in what Particular soever we fall short of the just Apprehensions we ought to have of our Lord's Greatness and Goodness, so far we cease to be true Believers in him as our Saviour; for as in denying him to be Man we should deny the Possibility of his Sufferings, or their any Way relating to, or benefitting us; so by denying him to be God, we should deny him to be the Lord; we should as far as in us lieth take away the Sufficiency of his Merits, and the most cogent Obligation of Obedience to his Laws.

THE

## 124. SERMON VI.

THE other Observation I shall make is this, that the Belief and Confession of this Truth upon which the whole Christian Religion doth depend, is to be wholly ascribed to the Holy Ghost, which alone produces this Belief in us, and enables us to continue in it. The Holy Ghost alone produces this Belief in us; *no Man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.* None but the Spirit of God could reveal to us that *Jesus* is the Son of God, that is of the same Nature with God; this Truth being altogether beyond the Reach of any human Discovery. And our Continuance in, as well as at first receiving this Belief is altogether owing to the Power and Grace of the same Spirit of Truth; it is by his Help alone that we are able to surmount those Difficulties, with which the Pride of our Reason, and the Struggling of our Lusts would tempt us

## SERMON VI. 125

us to doubt of, and to deny our Saviour's being the Lord, which in effect, and from the Manner in which the Apostle here uses the Expression, is the same Thing with renouncing his Religion and apostatizing from it.

As therefore, according to our Apostle, believing and acknowledging *Jesus* to be *the Lord* intends the becoming and the continuing to be a true Christian, such a Belief, if real, of our Lord's Divine Sovereignty being also the surest Foundation of Obedience to his Commands; so we are here taught that this Belief is not a Thing in our own Power or Choice, but what we altogether owe to the Grace of God: And the Apostle doth not tell us that no Man doth or of himself chuseth to entertain this Persuasion, but that no Man *can* say, that *Jesus* is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.

SINCE



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SINCE the bringing of Mankind from Heathenism and Idolatry to the true Knowledge of, and Belief in *Christ Jesus* is thus ascribed to the Grace of God, I shall proceed from the Words of my Text to consider the several Means by which this great Change was wrought; these we find distinguished under three several Kinds, each of which is ascribed to its peculiar Author, and all of them to God. The true Christian Faith, the confessing *Jesus to be the Lord* is owing

I. *First*, To the various Gifts of that one only Spirit, who bestows them.

II. *Secondly*, To the various Administrations of that one Lord *Jesus Christ*, who appointed them.

III. *Thirdly*, To the various Operations of that one God, which worketh all in all.

I. *First*,

## SERMON VI. 127

I. *First*, THE true Christian Faith, the confessing *Jesus* to be the Lord, is owing to the various Gifts of that one only Spirit, who bestowed them, *There are Diversities of Gifts, but it is the same Spirit*, who gives them, as we need not doubt to fill up the Expression; What and how manifold and distinct those Gifts of the Spirit, which are here intended, were, may be learnt from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> Verse of this Chapter. And these we shall find upon considering them to have been of a miraculous Nature, either with regard to the Manner in which they were employed, or at least in the Manner wherein they were bestowed and received: Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith, divers Kinds of Tongues, and the Interpretation of Tongues, when given in an instant to those who before were destitute of them, being as manifest  
and

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and certain Proofs of the supernatural Power of him who gave such Gifts, as the Gifts of healing, of Prophecy, and of working Miracles could be. Now these Gifts, these various Manifestations of the Holy Spirit were *given to every Man* that had them, as we are told in the 7<sup>th</sup> Verse of this Chapter, *to profit withal*; they were not so much designed for the Honour and Advantage of those who exercised them, as for the Profit, the Good of those upon whom they were to be employed. And the Profit, the Usefulness of them was the Tendency and Efficacy which they had towards planting in the World, and rendring Men disposed to receive the mysterious Truths, upon the Belief of which the Religion of *Christ* is founded. Truths above the Comprehension of Man required a Kind of Evidence and Power more than human to render them capable



## SERMON VI. 129

capable of being entertained? The Proof was necessarily to be indisputable, where the Truth it was produced for was mysterious; and therefore the Holy Spirit, when he was to teach the World to *say that Jesus was the Lord*, was pleased in various Manifestations of himself to convince Mankind, that it was God who declared that Truth to it; and therefore any Doubts arising from Man's being unable to comprehend how this could be true, ought not to weigh against that Authority, which a Divine Testimony, the Revelation of God himself gave to it. One and the first Means therefore of bringing Man to the Faith of *Christ* is the Manifestation of the Spirit of God in those miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost, which he bestowed upon the Church in its first Ages. And this was peculiarly fitted to the first Ages, as that which would necessarily awa-

## 130 SERMON VI.

ken Men from the Lethargy they had so long lain in; would stir up their Attention, and make them receive with the greatest Regard and Submission what they had such convincing Proofs to assure them was delivered to them, by the Authority and as the Will and Word of God.

A SECOND Mean by which the Faith of *Christ* was first planted and afterwards preserved in the World is that of the Christian Ministry in its several Orders and Offices: *There are,* says my Text, *Differences of Administrations but the same Lord Jesus Christ* is he who hath appointed and authorized them all. What follows at the 28<sup>th</sup> Verse of this Chapter compared with the iv<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the Epistle to the EPHESIANS at the 11<sup>th</sup> Verse, will effectually justify thus supplying and interpreting these Words. In the Epistle to the EPHESIANS it is said, that *He, Jesus Christ*; in this Chapter

## SERMON VI. 131

Chapter to the CORINTHIANS it is said, that *God*, set in the Church Apostles, Prophets, and Teachers. And these Administrations are different; they are expressly distinguished and ought not to interfere one with another. All are not Apostles, or Prophets, or Teachers; every one hath his several Rank, and as we find Rom. xii. 6, 7, 8. every one ought to apply himself with Diligence to his peculiar Business: He that is a Prophet, or a Minister, or a Teacher, or a Ruler, is required to employ himself in his own Sphere, and to consider that God hath appointed others to attend other Concerns, and that he will exact an Account from him of his own.

OUR Lord *Jesus Christ*, hath we find, given to his Church different Administrations of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit as a Mean of bringing Men to, and continuing them in his



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true Faith. Perhaps it may be said, that this however true, hath no Regard to us, but relates only to the first Age of Christianity, when the World was by miraculous Means, which are not used now, to be brought to the Belief of *Christ Jesus*. The Objection answers itself: While the Occasion was thus extraordinary, the Means were so too: The Conversion of a prejudiced wicked World was beyond the Power of any ordinary Instrument to effect: Miracles were necessary for the working of that, which was itself perhaps the greatest Miracle of all.

BUT besides this first and great Necessity of a Ministry that should be furnished with such extraordinary Power, we may find mention in Scripture of other constant and perpetual Occasions which the Church after it was planted and established among Men would have, and to answer which,  
 God

## SERMON VI. 133

God had appointed a Ministry accordingly. In the iv<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the Epistle to the EPHESIANS at the 11<sup>th</sup> 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Verses, where many of the miraculous Administrations mentioned in other Places are omitted, we find that *Christ* had given Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers, *for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ: Till we all come in the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fullness of Christ.* These are Purposes for which God instituted a Ministry in his Church, but are all these Purposes answered? are they so fully and effectually answered, as to supersede the Necessity of that Ministry, which God appointed for these Occasions of his Church, and to leave no further Use for them? Are we, for in-

## 134 SERMON VI.

stance, *perfected as Saints?* and is thereupon the Work of the Ministry done and ended with us? Can we be said to *be come to the Knowledge of the Son of God*, when we are still to contend as much as ever for the Truth of *Jesus Christ* his being the Son of God, of the same Nature and Essence with him, as every Son is with his Father? Or especially, are we come to *Unity in the Faith*, while it is with such Assurance asserted, that Unity in Faith is not necessary among Christians, provided there be a Unity of Charity, which yet it is to be feared is still more miserably wanting than the other? Different Administrations are therefore still as necessary for the edifying of the Body of *Christ* and perfecting the Members of it in the Knowledge of, and Faith in him, as ever they were at first to convert Men to him; and how different soever they are with regard  
 to



## SERMON VI. 135

to one another, they are all derived from one Lord *Jesus Christ*, who is our Head, and High Priest, from whom all others receive their Authority and Instructions to promote one and the same End, the Salvation of Mankind.

I HAVE now considered two of the Means specified in my Text, which it hath pleased God to employ for the bringing Mankind out of Darkness and thy Shadow of Death, into the glorious Light of his Truth, and for the continuing them in the Belief and Profession of it. And these with respect to those who were to receive Benefit from them, might be called external: The various Gifts of the Holy Ghost, and the different Orders by which they were to be administered, were committed to others for the Conversion and Instruction of such as stood in need of those Helps. But in order to render these Means

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successful, it was necessary that those  
 for whose Benefit they were employ-  
 ed should be fitly disposed and made  
 capable to receive Benefit from them.  
 For that they were not of themselves  
 in any such Disposition, we may con-  
 clude from the Necessity of using a-  
 ny miraculous Means for their Con-  
 version, and from the general ill  
 Treatment they who laboured in  
 that Ministry, and employed those  
 miraculous Powers, found from those  
 they applied themselves to. And  
 that without such a Disposition no  
 miraculous Gifts nor any Ministry  
 how faithfully and industriously so-  
 ever it be discharged, will attain the  
 Purpose aimed at by them, is very  
 evident from the great Numbers of  
 those who seeing the Miracles which  
 were wrought, and hearing the Prea-  
 ching of those who worked them,  
 continued yet unconverted and recei-  
 ved

## SERMON VI. 137

ved no Benefit from their Gifts and Labour.

BESIDES these *Diversities of Gifts, and Differences of Administrations,* there are therefore

*Thirdly, Diversities of Operations,* by which *the same God, which worketh all in all,* giveth Success to the the Use of the other Means, and renders the Manifestation of them profitable to the World. In what Manner and by what various Means the Grace of God works upon the Minds of Men, removes their Prejudices, subdues the obstinate Pride, and Self-Sufficiency of their Opinions, gives a new Bent and Determination to their Affections, and fits them to receive into their Hearts the Faith of *Christ*, and to become the *Temples of the Holy Ghost*, I shall not attempt to describe. That these good Purposes are fulfilled by his working in  
us



## 138 SERMON VI.

us we may be certain from the Proof that hath been offered to shew, as that nothing naturally within our selves, so nothing how miraculous soever without us, is of itself and without this inward Disposition, sufficient to produce these good Effects in us. We are therefore to depend upon the Grace of God, *which worketh all in all*, for all the Benefit which we are to receive from the manifold Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and from our giving Attention to those whom he has appointed to be his Ministers for our Edification: We are to apply ourselves diligently to obtain and use all these Means, as being most effectual for our own Advantage. And if we search with Care, and obey with Sincerity that Revelation which the Holy Ghost by his inspired Apostles, Evangelists and Prophets hath made to us, and in order to our better understanding thereof attend to  
the

## SERMON VI. 139

the Instruction of those, whom our Lord *Jesus Christ* hath appointed to minister to him, and unite with them in paying our Service to him according to his own Institutions and Ordinances, the Grace of God will not be wanting to give Success to those Means, and *will work in us both to will and to do* his Pleasure in this Life, and to obtain the Reward of having so done, in a better.

I HAVE now given some Account of the several Particulars mentioned in my Text: I shall now infer something from them, and so conclude.

*First,* FROM what hath been said we may infer the Truth of that mysterious Doctrine of the Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Divine Nature. Distinct Mention is here made of one Spirit, one Lord, and one God: And to each of these is ascribed what can only belong to one God, miraculous Gifts to one, the

## 140 SERMON VI.

the Sovereignty and Legislature of the Church to another, and Omnipotence, *the working all in all* to the other: Not that any thing is ascribed to one of these exclusively of the other two; but that which is ascribed to each is sufficient, when rightly considered, to prove Him to be God, of whom it is spoken. If any one should deny that three Divine Persons are here spoken of, he must be forced to acknowledge that the Spirit spoken of in the first Verse of my Text is called *Lord and God* in the two following Verses: Which will equally overthrow his Argument, since no one who acknowledges the Divinity of the Holy Ghost can any Way find it necessary to dispute against the Divinity of either of the other Persons.

*Secondly*, FROM what hath been said, we may infer the Divine Institution and Appointment of the Christian



## SERMON VI. 141

stian Ministry. As to the Divine Mission and Authority of the Preachers of the Gospel at the first planting of it, it cannot be called into question: The Miracles they wrought in such Abundance, and the wonderful Gifts of the Holy Ghost which were bestowed upon them, were sufficient to manifest that they were Teachers *sent from God, since none could do such mighty Works as they did, except God was with them.* The Condition of the Church when planted, doth not require fresh extraordinary Means to be used on its Account: The Certainty of those Miracles which were formerly wrought, stands unquestionably recorded, and as effectually proves the Truth of the Gospel still, as it would be proved, if those Miracles were all to be wrought again now; and Miracles are not to be expected, where there is no need of them at all.

IT

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It is no Consequence, that because the present Ministers of the Church do not exert the same Powers which were exercised at first, therefore they do not derive their Authority from the same Head. How different soever the Administrations may be, it is *the same Lord* who hath appointed them all; and while the Uses and Necessities for which he appointed them are as visible and pressing as ever, their Ministry is as much authorized by him to such Ends as he has appointed it for, as any more extraordinary Ministration was to answer equally extraordinary Occasions: Authority being founded not in the Manner wherein an Office is executed, but in the Right, which he who confers it, hath to do so.

*Thirdly*, FROM the last Particular in my Text, which assures us, that though *there are Diversities of Operations*, manifold Means of Grace, yet that

## SERMON VI. 143

that it is God which worketh all in all, let us be taught how absolutely our Salvation depends upon God's Mercy, and that without the Assistance of his Grace, all our Endeavours will not be sufficient for that Purpose. He hath given us a Revelation of his Will, which it is therefore our Duty to study and to obey: He hath instituted a Ministration in his Church for our Assistance and Benefit, which therefore it is our Duty to give ear to: By this *we have been baptized into one Body*, as we are told in the 13<sup>th</sup> Verse of this Chapter, *and have been all made to drink into one Spirit*; have all been united as Members in the Body of *Christ* by Communion with him. Let us therefore in the Unity of the same Faith, Love and Worship join together in praying fervently and constantly to God for the Aid of his Grace, that having

served



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served and pleased him in this Life;  
we may attain the End of our Hope;  
even a Crown of Glory in the Life  
which is to come; eternal in the  
Heavens. *Amen.*



SERMON



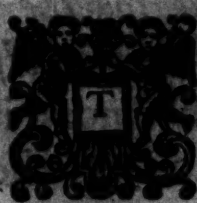
## SERMON VII.

Preached at a VISITATION.



JOHN XV. 16.

*Ye have not chosen me, but I have  
chosen you, and ordained you, that  
you should go and bring forth Fruit,  
and that your Fruit should remain:  
That whatsoever ye shall ask of the  
Father in my Name, he may give  
it you.*



THE Church of God is re-  
presented to us in Holy  
Scripture, under several  
Figures, which (however  
different they may be from one ano-  
L ther

## 146 SERMON VII.

ther in some respects) do yet all agree in teaching us, how absolute the Dependence is, which the Church hath upon *Christ*; and how intimate the Communion is, which the true Members of It do hold with him, and with one another. In *EPHES. ii. 20, 21.* the Church is compared to an *Holy Temple, a Building fitly framed together; of which the Apostles and Prophets are there said to be the Foundation; and Jesus Christ himself to be the chief Corner Stone.* In *1 CORIN. xii.* from 12. to 28. the same inspired Writer compares the Church to an Human Body, of which (as he more particularly tells us, in *EPH. iv. 15.* and onwards) *Christ is the Head, from whom the whole Body, fitly joined together, maketh Encrease, to the Edifying itself in Love.* In both these Instances it appears how necessary Union of the Church with *Christ*, and Communion of its Members one with another is,  
in



## SERMON VII. 147

in order to its Continuance; since neither can that Building stand, which is removed from its Foundation, and whose several Parts are separated one from the other; nor can that Body subsist, which is divided from its Head, and the Members of which are disunited, and scattered. In the Chapter which my Text is taken from, we have this represented under another Image, which is that of a *Vine* with its *Branches*. And, in this, the Necessity of the Church's Union with *Christ*, if it would derive any Benefit to itself from him, is placed in the strongest Light that it can be set in. In the 5<sup>th</sup> Verse our Lord speaks to his Disciples in these Words, *I am the Vine, Ye are the Branches*: And, Ver. 4. he had said, *As the Branch cannot bear Fruit of itself, except it abide in the Vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me*. We may from some Particulars in

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this Context, be able to collect what our Lord intends, when he speaks of our *abiding in him*. At the 7<sup>th</sup> Verse he promises that our Prayers shall be heard and granted, if we *abide in him, and His Words abide in us*: If we receive, and persevere in the Belief of what he hath taught. This is *abiding in him by Faith*. At the 10<sup>th</sup> Verse he tells us, that, if we *keep his Commandments*, we shall *abide in his Love*. This is *abiding in him by Obedience*. If we desire to know in particular, what Commandment he most especially requires us to keep: He tells us, in the 12<sup>th</sup> Verse, *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another*. This is *abiding in him by Charity*. This is *abiding in our Lord Jesus Christ*; while we continue stedfastly in his true *Faith*, we shall *obey his Commandments*, and shall *love one another*: We shall preserve our *Union* with him, and our  
*Communi-*

## SERMON VII. 149

*Communion* with his *Church*; or, (in the figurative Language of this Chapter) we shall continue in the *Vine*, and shall bear *much* and acceptable, and remaining Fruit. To dispose us the more to abide in him, he, in the 2<sup>d</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Verses represents to us the sure Destruction which attends upon our not doing so. Every Branch, which, either for its Unfruitfulness is cut off, or is by any other Means separated from the Vine, is withered, cast into the Fire, and burnt. Whereas on the other hand, if we do continue in him, and bear much Fruit, he tells us, in the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Verses, that whatsoever we ask in his Name shall be done unto us; that we shall glorifie God, that his Joy shall remain in us, and that our Joy shall be full.

HAVING thus taught his first Followers the Necessity, and the Advantage of *abiding in him*, of be-



## 150 SERMON VII.

ing united together in his mystical Body, he in the Words of my Text informs them, how he would bring other Men to this Union: Namely, by the Ministry of such as *He chuses, ordains, and sends* to produce this good Effect, and to perpetuate it among Men, by that Blessing of God, which they are encouraged to pray to him for, and which he hath promised to crown their Labours with. *I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go, and bring forth Fruit, and that your Fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my Name, he may give it you.*

IN speaking of this Ministry, which our Lord here tells us *He hath ordained*, I shall apply myself to shew,

I. *First*, THE Divine Institution and Authority of it.

II. *Secondly*, THE Ends for which it was appointed.

III. *Thirdly*,

## SERMON VII 151

III. *Thirdly*, WHAT Assistance the Ministers of *Christ* may depend upon, and what Reward they may assure themselves of, in faithfully discharging the Office they are in.

I. *First*, I AM to shew the Divine Institution and Authority of the Christian Ministry. Our Lord *Jesus Christ* saith to his Apostles in my Text, *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you.* Will the *Socinians*, or the *Arians* object, that this doth not amount to a Proof of a divine Institution, because they will not acknowledge that *Christ* who ordained them, is truly God? They may find, I COR. xii. 28. in express Words, that it is *God* who hath set (the Word in the original is the same which in my Text is translated *ordained*, ἐθηκε, ἑταρε) Apostles, Teachers, and other Ministers in his

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Church. This is a sufficient Answer to these Objectors; but there are others, who will not so readily be satisfied in this Particular. The *Deists* will deny that there is any Ministry of Divine Institution. Those who claim to be accounted *Free-Thinkers* will contend, that though the Apostles had a Mission, and Authority from *Christ*, yet that it continued only while they lived; and that those, who pretend to any Authority from God now, have no Warrant for it; but derive their whole Authority from human Appointment only. The *Enthusiast* will assume Authority to himself to be a Minister, without being able to produce any Commission, whether from God, or Man, for his so doing.

As for the first of these: The *Deists*: The same Arguments which prov'd the Authority, that the Apostles of *Christ* had from God, to o-  
ther



## SERMON VII. 153

*ther Heathens*, are altogether as effectual to convince them of it also. The Miracles which the Apostles wrought in Maintenance of this Truth, are so authentickly attested and recorded, that they must allow them; or disable, and evacuate the Truth and Credit of all historical Evidence whatsoever.

As for such as pretend to acknowledge that the first Ministers in the Church of *Christ* had a divine Mission and Authority; but yet deny that they could communicate it to others, in such a Manner as that it should be transmitted to more remote Successions; these may be convinced of their being in Error, not only by the Reason of the Thing in itself, but even by Fact. For instance and with respect to Fact. *St. Paul* did not only ordain *Titus* (whom he therefore calls *his own Son after the common Faith*, Ep. to *TIT.* i. 4.) but farther, he  
gave

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gave him Power to ordain others also, in the several Cities of *Crete* his Diocese: as we find in the 5<sup>th</sup> Verse. This Authority of ordaining Ministers of *Christ*, therefore was not so limited to, so personal in, the Apostles, as that it could not be imparted to others. The Truth I am contending for, will be still more evident, if, together with Fact and Practice, we consider the Reason of the Thing in itself, and the Ends for which any Ministry at all was first appointed in the Christian Church by Almighty God. For if it shall appear that those Ends, or any one of them, for which God first appointed a Ministry in his Church, do still require the same Means to be used in order to their being obtained; it ought to be acknowledged that God's Institution of a Ministry doth still continue to subsist, and by consequence that his Authority and Commission do still remain

## SERMON VII. 155

main with it. The Consideration of this will necessarily join together the first and

### II. *Second Parts of my Discourse.*

In Eph. iv. 11. and onwards, we read that our Lord gave *Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers* to his Church, *for the Work of the Ministry, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the edifying of the Body of Christ; till we all come, in the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ.* Are there any of these Ends unnecessary to be pursued, and provided for now? or was one Age alone to have the Benefit of this Provision? Mankind hath still the same need of Instruction, of Edification, of being perfected in Holiness, and united in the true Faith, and Knowledge of the Son of God, that  
it



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it had when the Apostle assigned these as the Ends, for which God had appointed a Ministry in his Church. And therefore, as these Ends, for obtaining which God instituted various Administrations in his Church, are still as needful to be attained as ever: It ought in Reason to be allowed, that it is *the Will of God*, that the same Means should still be used for the furthering them, which he at first appointed. And, that he continues the same Authority and Blessing to that, which is his Ordinance, and Appointment.

IN what Manner this Ministry doth obtain the good Ends it was designed for, will appear if we consider the Orders, and Mission which they have received, who are intrusted with it. *I (saith our Lord) have chosen, and ordained you, that you should go, and bring forth Fruit, and that your Fruit should remain; that whatsoever*

## SERMON VII. 157

*soever ye shall ask of the Father in my Name, he may give it you.* This is directed to the Apostles as Ministers of *Christ*, and not in general to all Christians; as appears from our Lord's Mission of them, which he refers to, *I have ordained you that you should go.* Other Christians are *called*, but these are *sent*: Nor is it difficult to find what they are sent for.

THE first End of their Mission is that of *Preaching*. *Go ye therefore and teach all Nations*; saith our Lord to his Apostles, MATT. xxviii. 19. and MARK xvi. 15. *Go ye into all the World, and preach the Gospel.* How necessary particular Authority is to qualify Men for Preachers, appears from express Word of Holy Scripture; as we find ROM. x. 15. where *St. Paul* (having shewn in the foregoing Verse how necessary a Mean Preaching is, of bringing Men to the Faith of *Christ*) asserts that it is equally necessary

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fary that he who preaches shall have due Authority for his so doing. *How shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a Preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?* This was one Mean by which the Apostles and Ministers of Christ were to go, and bring forth Fruit: They were, by preaching the Gospel, to convert Men to the Faith of Christ: Nor is the same Mean less necessary now, that *their Fruit may remain*, that Men may continue in that Faith, and in a Practice answerable to, and worthy of it.

ANOTHER Mean by which the Christian Ministry brings forth Fruit, and that *such as shall remain*, is, by performing Service to God, in the Offices of Divine Worship. How successful this Mean, which Christ hath ordained them to use, is, appears from my Text, in which they  
are



## SERMON VII. 159

are assured, *that whatsoever they shall ask of the Father, in his Son's Name, He will give it them.* In particular they are to administer those Sacraments, which *Christ* hath ordained in his Church, and of which Mysteries he hath appointed them to be the Stewards and Distributors.

For instance, those who are sent to *preach*, are likewise sent to *baptize*; as appears by a Text already quoted, *MATT. xxviii. 19.* and by other Places of the New Testament. And, as to the Lord's Supper, we may collect from the different Language which *St. Paul* useth when he intends those who consecrate, and when he means those who only receive it, who were the Dispensers of it. In *I COR. x. 16.* he saith, *We bless the Cup, which is the Communion of the Blood of Christ;* and, *We break the Bread, which is the Communion of the Body of Christ.* But  
in

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in the next Chapter, speaking of those who receiv'd this Sacrament, he speaketh in the other Persons. *As often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup: and, He that eateth, and drinketh unworthily.* He doth not suppose them to consecrate, but only to receive it. I shall not nor will the Time permit me to be thus particular, in treating of the several other Offices, and Powers, which the Christian Ministry discharges, and is invested with, in order to its bringing forth the plentiful and lasting Fruit of God's Glory, and the Instruction, and Salvation of Mankind. Every one of these is, not only an Honour, and a Privilege, but also a strict and weighty Duty, incumbent upon all those who are intrusted with it; and the Nature, and Moment of them all are, I hope, better understood by those, whom it most nearly imports to consider them, than  
I
that

## SERMON VII. 161

that it should be needful for me, to be more prolix or explicit in insisting on, and representing them to them. Thus much only I shall think proper to observe, that it is our inestimable Happiness to be Members of a Church in which we have the Benefit and Enjoyment of all these effectual Means of Grace and Salvation. In which the Mission of our Ministry is unquestionably authorized, and the several holy Orders of it happily preserved: In which the Word of God is profitably preached, and the true Faith of *Christ* professed and asserted: In which the Worship of God is constantly and decently performed, and his Sacraments reverently administered, without being corrupted with Idolatry, or sacrilegiously maimed, and impaired: A Church whose Communion we cannot change for that of any other in the World, without inexcusable Injury to our selves, in the

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Loss



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Loss of some or other of those great Advantages, which, as I have been observing, we do enjoy in it, but which cannot be all found united any where else. I shall now apply myself, in the

III. *Third* Place, briefly to consider what Help the Ministers of *Christ* may depend upon, and what Reward they may support themselves with the Hopes of, while they are faithfully discharging the Offices they are ordained to.

A VERY short Reflexion upon the Nature, and Circumstances of this Ministry, will satisfy us, that this is a very necessary Consideration. A Minister of *Christ* is sent, and entrusted with very important Powers by Almighty God; and he must one Day give a very punctual, and severe Account to him, of the Uses he hath employed those Powers to, and how

## SERMON VII. 163

he hath discharged the Trust which he had undertaken. He is sent to the World, to that World, which (as our Saviour tells him in the Context) *hateth him*; which is too wicked to submit to those Laws of *Christ*, which he is to publish: and too proud and self-sufficient to receive those Truths, which he is to preach. So that (whether he look to him who sends him, or upon those to whom he is sent) he will find himself beset with Difficulty, and Danger; the Discharge of his Duty will be difficult: The neglecting, or abandoning it, will be more than dangerous. And yet, while he considers what Aids, and Rewards are provided for him, he will have no Cause to be so discouraged, as to shrink back from the faithful, and willing Discharge of his Office. He will recollect, that the same God, who hath laid his Duty upon him, hath promised to be present with him always,

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ways, in the Performance of it, and to give a Blessing to his Endeavours in it. This Consideration will free him from Diffidence, and Distrust of his being able to answer the Ends of his Ministry, how important, or difficult soever they may be. Nor are there other Considerations wanting to render him willing, and desirous, as well as able, to *bring forth that good Fruit*, which is expected from him. The promoting the Glory of God, by performing his Worship, and declaring, and defending his Truths, and the furthering the eternal Salvation and Happiness of Mankind, these are Offices so truly noble, that it is an Honour, and an inexpressible Delight to be employed in them; and in the very utmost Labour of this Kind, there is *exceeding great Reward*.

In Meditation of this, the Minister of *Christ* will chearfully apply himself



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himself, and that with Diligence, and Constancy, to the Performance of his Duty. He will always keep in his Mind those Directions which he may draw from my Text; and will be active and indefatigable in putting them into Practice. His Mission is to *go*; and to *bear much* and lasting *Fruit*: He will not therefore stand still unprofitably in Indolence, and Sloth; He will vigorously press forward towards the glorious End of his high Calling: And, if he is in want of Help, he will betake himself to his God for it, in a firm Dependence upon the Promise which he hath, that God will do for him whatsoever he shall ask in the Name of *Christ*. He will proceed with Courage, and Firmness, while he considers how sufficiently he is authorized, and warranted, as having been commissioned to his Office, by those who for and under *Christ*, have an undoubted

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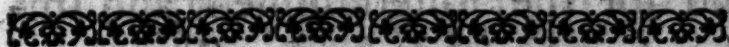
Right of conferring it upon him. He will not be shocked, and offended at any evil Treatment he may meet with from the Hatred of this World, while he sets before his Sight the Example of his Lord, *whom it hated, before it hated him*; but who endured, and even despised the worst Efforts of that Hatred, *and is now set down at the right Hand of God*. To that blessed Place he will constantly direct his Eyes and Endeavours, and will aspire after and, at length, attain to an eminent and distinguished Rank, even in the Kingdom of Glory itself; in which, they that have been thus truly wise, *and have turned many to Righteousness, shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament, as the Stars for ever and ever.*

SERMON



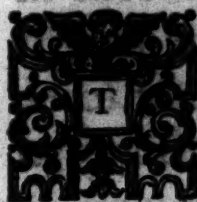
## SERMON VIII.

Preached at an ASSISE.



PROV. XX. 12.

*The hearing Ear, and the seeing Eye,  
the Lord hath made even both of  
them.*



THE Words of my Text are  
capable of several and those  
very different Meanings,  
according as we under-  
stand them with respect to the dif-



## 168 SERMON VIII.

ferent Capacities in which Man may be considered.

If we regard Man, as he is by Nature, as a living Creature only: My Text teaches us, that the same Beneficent Being which created him, and gave him Life, gave him also these most admirable Helps of Sight, and Hearing, which are of such great, and necessary Use, both for the Well-being and Preservation of his Body; and for the Entertainment and Improvement of his Soul. This is to understand the Words literally and, in their most obvious Sense.

If we consider Man under a Religious Character, as a Servant of God, and obliged to obey his Will, we shall understand these Words in a spiritual Meaning; and be taught by them, that it is altogether to be ascribed to the Love and Mercy of Almighty God, that we have any Ability

## SERMON VIII. 169

bility to discover our Duty, or any Disposition to perform it.

If we respect Man in still another View, and, besides his natural, and his religious Situation, consider him as related to the rest of Mankind, and particularly as intended to live in Agreement with his Fellow-Creatures, and to perform such Duties as arise from such a State: Or (in fewer Words) if we regard him in his Political Capacity, as a Member of Civil Society, we shall then find it proper to understand the Words of my Text, and to apply them to Mankind, in a figurative Meaning, which shall be offered to your Considerations, as it is expressed in the Comment which is made upon these Words, in the Writings of a very learned Prelate of our own Church.

His Words are as follow: \* “Some good Expositors interpret this Verse

\* Bishop Patrick's Note (g) in his Argument before the XX<sup>th</sup> of *Proverbs*.

I

“ wholly

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“ wholly concerning the Happiness a  
“ People is in, when the Subjects are  
“ so humble, that they are inclined  
“ meekly to obey their Superiors;  
“ and their Superiors so wise, that  
“ they solicitously provide for their  
“ Safety and good Government.

THE Concurrence of both these  
is necessary, and where it is found,  
it is the Gift of God.

IT is in this Sense principally,  
that I shall at this Time discourse up-  
on this Text, and that in the follow-  
ing Method:

I. *First*, I SHALL endeavour to  
shew, how the Meaning I have  
just mentioned, may be col-  
lected from the Expressions u-  
sed in the Text.

II. *Secondly*, I SHALL consider the  
several Duties which are inten-  
ded in it; and the happy Ef-  
fects



## SERMON VIII. 171

fects of the faithful Discharge of them.

III. *Thirdly*, and *lastly*, I SHALL make some Inferences from what shall have been said.

I. *First*, I SHALL endeavour to shew, how the Sense, in which I propose to discourse upon this Text, may be collected from the Expressions which are used in it.

THAT it may not be accounted using too much Liberty, in putting a figurative Construction upon these Words, it may be observed, that, besides the known Practice of Writers (those especially of the *Eastern* Parts of the World) to express their Sentiments in this Manner, and to be understood accordingly by their Readers: It is peculiarly fit to allow this Liberty in expounding this Book of *Solomon*, the very Name and Title of which (Poverbs or Parables) shews

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shews that more is to be understood, than what appears at first Sight in the Expression, and that Allusions and Comparisons, provided they be not forced, and unnatural, are, for the most part, not only to be suffered, but are even necessary to do Right to the Author's Meaning, which would often seem to be of little Value or Importance, were it not, by these Helps, placed in a more full and proper Light.

THE very Text which is at present under Consideration is an Instance sufficient to support the Observation which hath just been made. Admitting that *Solomon* and his Readers were beforehand Believers, that God created Man; it could be no Discovery, that the Ear was hearing, and the Eye seeing, and that God was the Maker of them both. Not but that this Text, even thus considered, will, upon a thorough Enquiry, suggest  
to

## SERMON VIII. 173

to us powerful Motives to adore the Goodness and the Wisdom of God, and to employ the *Sight* and *Hearing*, which he hath given, to the best and most profitable Purposes.

BUT we shall find more abundant Meaning and Instruction in it, if to this *literal*, we add the *spiritual* Meaning, or if, by a very common, and therefore well authorized Figure, we apply to the Political Body, what here relates to the natural; and consider what may be learnt from the Text, when enquir'd into with this View. The Eye is that by which the Body is guided and directed, that by which it is enabled to be aware of, and to avoid whatever might be dangerous, hurtful or destructive to it; that which discovers, and conducts the Man to what appears to be conducive to his Advantage and Well-being; that which, when rightly disposed and applied, qual-  
lifies



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lifies him to discern Things as they really are, and to prevent being misled, and imposed upon by Disguises, false Colours, and Appearances. How well, and with what exact Congruity is all this to be applied to the superior and governing Part of the Political Body? the proper Employment of which, is to perform the very same Offices, for the Safety and Benefit of the publick, which the seeing Eye hath just been represented as discharging for each particular Person in it. Which (vigilant, and intent upon providing for the good of the whole) guards against approaching Dangers; and is ready to discover all Opportunities of advancing, and increasing its Benefit, and good Estate.

NOR is the Governed, the inferior and subordinate Part of a Political Body less properly designed by the *bearing Ear* in the human Body.

## SERMON VIII. 175

By this we receive the Instruction, and Information of our Duty, which is necessary in order to our being directed and qualified to perform it; and, in the Language of inspired Writers, *Hearing* and *obeying*, are equivalent Expressions, and exhibit to us one and the same Meaning. The Result of all that is to be collected from the Text (in the figurative Meaning, in which it is now considered) is, that a People is then in Likelihood of being most secure and happy, when the Governors are watchful and provident for the Welfare of the Publick; and the Subjects are in a Disposition to be obedient to those that are their Rulers, and attentive to, and diligent in the Discharge of the Duties, which, in the Station they are set in, are peculiarly incumbent upon them.

It must however be remembered, that, wherever this is the Case, the  
Praise

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Praise and Honour of it is to be thankfully ascribed to God; to whose Goodness it is wholly owing. It is He who hath made both the *Hearing Ear*, and the *Seeing Eye*; that supplies to Governors Qualifications and Endowments proper to enable them to discharge the important and beneficial Offices of their elevated Degree; and that influences Subjects to have a due Regard to their Superiors, and to pay to them that Obedience, which they ought to yield.

WHAT respective Duties are (according to the Text) belonging to the several Parts of the Political Body; and, the happy Effects which are caused to the whole, by the reciprocal and faithful Discharge of those Duties, is what was propos'd to be enquired into in the

*Second*



## SERMON VIII. 177

II. *Second Place.* IN general: A provident, and vigilant Concern for the publick, on the Part of the Ruler; and, on the Part of the Subject, attentive Heed to know his Duty, and a resolved, determined Disposition faithfully to discharge it, will comprehend whatever Meaning the Terms of the *seeing Eye*, and the *hearing Ear* may be supposed to carry, when used to the Purpose they are now applied to.

THE Epithets here used, which, at first Sight, may appear to be superfluous, and of no Signification; are not destitute of Propriety, and important Meaning. Each of the Parts named, is represented as in its best, and most perfect State, and in the actual Exercise, and Use of several, and distinct Faculties, and Powers, in order to it's obtaining the good Effects it is designed to produce. It

## 178 SERMON VIII.

is the *Eye seeing*, that is provident, circumspect, penetrating, and clear, that makes timely Discovery of approaching Hurt, or Dangers; that finds out the best Ways of avoiding, or repelling them; that sees through and (thereby) renders ineffectual, the fair, and false Appearances with which wicked Artifice, and Subtilty cover, and strive to recommend, and render successful such bad Designs and Measures as dare not bear the Light in their true Figure; and, which being free from Obstruction, Blemish, or Stain, is neither disabled from taking a perfect View of its Object, nor, by looking upon it through a wrong, or discoloured Medium, makes a disadvantageous and prejudicial Misrepresentation of it. Nor is it less necessary, that the *Ear* should be *Hearing*, that it may answer the Purposes it is intended for; that it should not be disabled by  
Deaf-

## SERMON VIII. 179

Deafness, or turn'd away with obstinate Purpose from attending to what it ought to hearken to; much less that it should be so far misused, as to listen to the contrary, and to be filled with whatever may tend to make it regardless of its being a Part of the whole; and therefore involved in its good or bad Condition.

In this last Particular the Concern of both the governing and governed Parts is mutual, nor can either of them say to the other, with Truth, *I have no Need of thee.* The Welfare, and, in Consequence of that, the good Affection, Peace, and Obedience of the Subject is necessary to the Power, the Honour, and the Support of the Ruler: Nor do the Subjects stand less in Need of the Wisdom, the Care, and Direction of the Ruler, in order to their Safety, and flourishing Estate; so that neither of them can attain the Welfare and Safety of



## 180 SERMON VIII.

his own Part, without having due Regard to the good of both, and (with his best Endeavours) striving to promote it accordingly.

WHAT hath been said may shew the Reasonableness of the Duties deduced from the Text; but what remains to be considered of it, lays a much more cogent Obligation upon Men, to act correspondently to those Duties, which is, that so is the Will of God. God hath been pleased, (by making such an Institution necessary to the Peace and Benefit of Mankind,) to introduce Government, and (in order to that) to distribute Men by his Providence, into different Ranks, and to render some subordinate to others. He hath made the *hearing Ear*, and the *seeing Eye*; hath appointed distinct Uses for each of them; and will not fail to exact an Account, whether they have been used, or not, to the Purposes he designed

## SERMON VIII. 181

signed them for. It is God *who putteth down one and setteth up another.* He exalteth Governors above the rest of their *Fellow-Creatures*, that by the Advantage of their more elevated Situation, they may with the larger, and more extended Views, provide for the Safety, and Welfare of those whom he hath placed under them, and committed to their Care, whether by just and necessary Arms, or by the Help of the Civil Sword, in the Execution of wise, and good Laws, that by restraining, or cutting off the wicked, injurious, and incorrigible, the peaceable and obedient may be protected in the safe Enjoyment of what by the Blessing of God, or their own honest Endeavours, they have acquired the Possession. But let those who are placed under Rulers consider that (however desirous of it the Rulers may be) they will not be able to answer these be-

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neficial Purposes, unless the Subjects contribute their Parts, by their Obedience and Submission. It is not the Power or Wisdom of any one Person that can be sufficient for this. His Ability in this respect is founded on the right he hath to make use of the united Powers, and Counsels of his Subjects; and, if they, when he calls for these to his Assistance, in order to their own Safety and Benefit, do not hear with Readiness and Obedience, they at once disable him and endanger, if not utterly destroy themselves.

UPON the whole, the Appointment, and declared Will of God, and the Safety, and Welfare of every People, render it absolutely necessary, that, in the Political Body, every Part, whether superior, or subordinate, should make the general Good the Aim of his Endeavours; and should apply himself to further it,  
by



## SERMON VIII. 183

by faithfully discharging those Duties, which the Station he is placed in, doth peculiarly exact from him.

It now remains, in the

III. *Third and Last Place*, briefly to infer something from what has been said.

SINCE Government, and all the Good it brings, is owing to God; since he enables Governors, and furnishes them with Qualifications, proper for the Discharge of their most important, and at the same Time most difficult Trust; since he alone can temper, over-rule, and adjust the various, perplexed, and interfering Inclinations, and Interests, of the numberless, and discording Members, which constitute the publick Body, so as to preserve such Union among them, as is necessary to the Subsistence and Preservation of the whole; it ought to be inferred, that

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there is a nearer Relation between God and Civil Government, than what many Men are willing to allow; and that it is not improper, in conducting the Affairs of temporal Rule, to consider it, as God's Institution, and which therefore should be interested in what concerns his Service, and Honour.

THE Authority and exalted Dignity of the Ruler, would have a very precarious, and infirm Foundation, were it placed merely upon Human Convenience and Consent, which are, in themselves so subject to change and alter their Appearances, as to cause that to be judged most fitting at one Time, that hath been accounted at other, directly the contrary. But the Will, and Appointment of God, is a fixed and unchangeable Principle of Duty, and gives the highest Authority, and Confirmation to that which it establishes. Therefore,

## SERMON VIII. 185

fore, while Civil Government is considered as an Ordinance of God for the Good of Mankind, its Dignity will be more revered, and its Benefits will be more certain, than they can otherwise be; nor will the Praise which is due to God for so inestimable a Blessing, be ungratefully, and sacrilegiously withheld from him.

RULERS, while they look up to God as the Source and Origin of their Power, and Honour, and call upon him for his Aid, to enable them to answer the Ends of their high Station, will think themselves concerned to maintain the awful Regard which is due to him, and (as far as they can) to guard whatever more especially belongs to him whose Substitutes they are, (whether his Name, his Word, or his Servants) from prophane, from insulting, and from hostile Treatment. And Subjects while they consider



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consider their Rulers, as appointed over them by Divine Providence, and enjoy the Protection, and Benefit, which Government conveys and secures to them; will be thankful to God, and obedient to their Superiors.

THEN will a People be in the happiest State, which they can be placed in upon Earth; the Favour of God will prosper what is the Effect of his own Appointments: Peace and Felicity will bless them in this World; and true Religion will conduct them to a better.



SERMON

(187)



## SERMON IX.

Preached at the Election of a  
MAYOR, of the City of  
*Glocester.*

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MARK IX. 35.

*And he sat down, and called the
Twelve, and saith unto them, if
any Man desire to be first, the same
shall be last of all and Servant of
all.*



THE Disciples of our blef-
fed Lord, having formed
their Expectations of his
Kingdom, according to
what they knew of the Kingdoms of
I this

188 SERMON IX.

this World; began to differ among themselves about their Rank and Precedence in it; and to put in, as early as they could, their Claims to the first, and greatest Dignity in it. A certain Proof this of the Greatness of their Mistake with respect to the Condition of our Lord's Kingdom, and the State it should be in, while they were to be the Ministers and Officers of it in this World: In which by their being the Greatest, they were only intitled to a greater Share of Labour, and Danger, than the rest of their Fellow-Subjects; and obliged at Length to render up a greater, and more strict Account than others. This Debate was managed among themselves only; and, when our Lord inquired after the Occasion of it, they were either ashamed, or afraid to discover it: As we find in the Verse before my Text, *They held their Peace; for by the Way, they had disputed*

SERMON IX. 189

disputed among themselves, which of them should be greatest, or greater than the rest; as the Words may be translated more agreeably to the Original.

OUR blessed Lord (without examining into, or deciding their several Pretensions) which we may imagine they grounded, some upon their Relation and Kindred to him according to the Flesh; others upon the Priority of their being called by him, and others upon their having been peculiarly distinguished, by what they might reckon Marks of his Favour, and Confidence, applies himself in the most effectual Manner to compose, and put an End to their Differences, by taking away the Cause of them, that mistaken Ambition, which engaged them in Debate. *If any Man, (saith our Lord,) desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and Servant of all.*

I THINK

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I THINK it proper, before I proceed to fix the Meaning of this Expression, to observe that such Interpreters as are (for the most Part) very careful, where our Lord, and his Apostles speak of any Powers, or Privileges, or Honours belonging to his Disciples, to extend them to all Christians in general, do yet very liberally bestow what is here said upon the Clergy only, and would have this Rule relate only to Ecclesiastical Claims of Primacy, and Power. But it will not be denied that it includes Pretensions of all Kinds, by those who rightly understand and consider it: And wherever there is Room and Employment for Ambition; wherever Debates arise about Power, and Rank, whether in Ecclesiastical, or Civil Society; the Maxim in my Text holds good, and *if any Man desires to be first, the same shall be last of all, and Servant of all.*

FOR

SERMON IX. 191

FOR the making this Truth evident and applicable to our present Purpose, I shall translate literally the Paraphrase of *Grotius* upon this Text and consider it, in the Remainder of this Discourse, in that sound and useful Sense, which he hath put upon it. It is then to this Purpose that our Lord speaks in my Text. *Such is the Condition of my Kingdom, that they who are to discharge the greatest Offices in it, are not to make greater Advantages to themselves by them, but to undergo more Labour for the Publick Service, and Benefit of others.* This is the Comment of the learned Expofitor I mentioned, and it renders the Text very intelligible. For what our Lord saith here with regard to such as excel in Dignity, is intended to teach them, not what Account others are to make of them, but what Account they are to make of themselves.

THEY

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THEY are to consider themselves less than the Publick; they are to look upon themselves as engaged in a Service, for the Benefit of others; as less at Liberty to gratify themselves; as more exposed to Temptations; more involved in Difficulties; and as those who have a greater Account to give than others, as having had more intrusted to their Care and Management. And, if they thus estimate the Matter, they will find the Text convertible in its Terms. If they are *last* in their own Esteem, and apply themselves faithfully, and impartially to promote the publick Good, and to be Servants, not to themselves, or to some Men, but to all, they shall not fail of being revered by all others, as *first of all and greatest of all*.

THIS is the Doctrine which the Text yields: And I shall more at large

THEY

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large recommend it to your Consideration, in the following Method.

I. *First*, I SHALL consider the Greatness, and Usefulness of the Ruler's Office.

II. *Secondly*, WHAT Sentiments are proper for such as are intrusted with it. And

III. *Thirdly*, WHAT Account ought to be made of it, by those who are placed under it, and enjoy the Benefits of it.

I. *First*, I am to consider the Greatness, and Usefulness of the Ruler's Office.

THESE Particulars are both implied in my Text: Its Usefulness, in that the Ruler is serviceable; its Greatness, in that he is serviceable to all. I shall not spend any Time in distinguishing between the different Kinds of Rulers, and shewing that
O my

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my Text is alike applicable to every
Soft of Government.

THE greatest of all earthly Govern-
ors is obliged to be useful, and in
that Sense to serve the Publick. And
those Rulers, whose Jurisdiction is of
less Extent, have yet a great Trust
committed to them, and many are
under the Influence of their Admini-
stration. To preserve publick Tran-
quillity, to protect the Peaceable, to
restrain and controul the Turbulent
and refractory, to encourage the In-
dustrious, to punish the Slothful and
the Wicked is the peculiar Business
of the Ruler, and in attending upon
this, he is in the most honourable
Sense of the Expression, *the Servant*
of all: He is of universal Benefit:
He is a publick Blessing, and every
one in the Community is served and
advantaged by him.

WITHOUT his Intervention, and
Protection, how precarious, nay how
impos-

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impossible would the Well-being of Society be? How must the Peaceable and inoffensive be insulted, the Undesigning and Honest be defrauded, the Weak be oppressed, and the Good and Virtuous be disturbed, by the much greater Numbers of unreasonable, insolent, over-reaching, violent and wicked Men, to whom they must be exposed without Redress, were not a Sword put into the Hand of the Ruler, for a *Terror to evil Works, and for the Praise*, for the Encouragement, and Security of *those that do well*. If under all the Checks of Authority, and after so many Examples of Justice upon Offenders, there are always too many to be found, who will venture to disturb publick Peace, to do Wrong and Violence to Men, and, as far as in them lies, to do Dishonour even to God himself, by prophaning his adorable Name in horrid, and yet at the same time

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vain and senseless Oaths and Imprecations, how much more insupportable, and universal would Wickedness be, were it at Liberty to be insolent with Impunity; and to keep within no other Bounds, than what it would set to itself?

MUCH more might be said, to shew of what Benefit the Ruler is, to all who live under his Influence, and who, while they are secured by his Protection, in the Enjoyment of their Peace and Property, are encouraged in the Practice of Virtue; and chearfully, and industriously promote one anothers Welfare, in that of the Publick.

As for the Greatness and Difficulty of the Ruler's Office, it will need very few Words to make it manifest. As the Ruler is the Appointment of God for the Good of Mankind, all the Art, and Power of Wickedness will be constantly at work to disable, and

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and enervate his Authority, and to intercept its Influence. False Colours will be used to disguise the Truth, and make him err in his Judgment: His Passions will all be solicited to draw him from his Uprightness and Integrity; Dangers will be represented to him to work upon his Fears; private Profit to obstruct the publick Good, Tenderness and Compassion to screen the Guilty, and to let them escape deserved Punishment. So that within himself he must meet with much Difficulty who is to govern others, and must often deny himself, to be *the Servant of all*.

BUT he will also find the Greatness and Difficulty of his Charge from without in the Numbers, and the intricate and perplexed Rights and Interests of those whom he is to govern, and to all of whom he is equally bound to distribute Justice. And if within himself he finds what will

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need a strict Guard over his Passions and Affections, that he may do right to other Men; so in dealing with others, he will have Cause to employ and exert all his Sagacity, Penetration, and Judgment to discover, and distinguish between Right and Wrong, to prevent being abused and imposed upon himself, and thereby being hindred from doing Justice to others. In short, that Office must be attended to with the greatest Industry, Circumspection, and Resolution, which brings along with it such numerous Temptations and Difficulties to him who bears it, and obliges him to be continually employing himself, that he may do good and Service to all others.

THIS is a small Part of what may be said concerning the Usefulness and the Greatness of the Ruler's Office, but yet from this it may appear that while it is of the greatest Benefit and

Advan-

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Advantage to others, it is of the greatest Difficulty and Burthen to himself; which brings me

II. *Secondly*, To consider, what Sentiments are proper for such as are intrusted with it.

AND we shall be directed in this Particular by our blessed Lord in my Text. For he expressly teaches us, what *they who desire to be first*, or greater in Power and Dignity than others, should propose to themselves. He hath taught what it is which makes a Man truly great, or according to the original Word in the Verse before my Text, *Greater* than others; it is the doing more Good, more Service to Mankind, than others do. This, as it is the End for which Rulers were instituted, so it is what adorns and ennobles them more than any Thing else in the Exercise of their Authority. Other Ensigns and Marks

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of Distinction may be taken away, or may be assumed without Difference by bad or good, deserving or undeserving Governors, but those who have distinguished themselves as Benefactors, those who have been serviceable in their Station to all, shall never be divested of the Honour they have deserved and, which the Gratitude of the World will not fail to pay them. When therefore the Ruler considers this, He will quickly understand that the more he strives to be the *Servant of all*, the more he will be exalted in Honour, and that in such a Service no Industry, no Application, no Vigilance ought to be wanting; He will consider that the more he promotes the general Welfare, the more he consults his own Dignity. With this View he will think no Man to whom he can do good in his Office out of his Care. But as he secures to the Rich their Wealth, so the
 Poor

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Poor shall be the better for his Protection. As he restrains those who would otherwise be wicked, so he will defend and encourage the Good. As he is careful for the Peace and Welfare of Man, so he will to the utmost of his Power promote the Glory, and Honour of God.

THESE Things he will consider, while he knows that the true Honour of a Ruler consists in the Good he doth to those, who are intrusted to his Care; in his being a publick Benefit, and general Advantage, or as our Saviour hath expressed it in my Text, *the Servant of all*.

THE same Consideration will have another good Effect upon the Ruler, which is this: It will preserve him from that Temptation, which most easily besets the exalted Station, that of being puffed up with the Thoughts of his Preeminence and Superiority. If he looks to the End of his Appointment,
he

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he will find it rather to regard others than himself, and therefore as often as he discharges the Offices of it, as often as he puts on those Distinctions, and sits upon that Seat which lifts him up above others, he will immediately recollect, that he is invested with his Power and Dignity to do good; and his Thoughts will turn altogether upon considering, how he shall be able to do good most effectually, in every Matter, as it comes before him. The publick Good, so far as it lies in his Power to promote it, will take up his Mind, and he will no otherwise think of himself, than as of an Instrument of promoting that, and as one, who must sometime render an Account, how sincerely, and impartially he hath done good to all.

BUT, besides this Preservative, there is another which he will draw from the Greatness of his Charge, and

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and the Difficulty of performing the Functions, and answering the Ends of his Office. Every Man considered single, and as charged only with the Care of himself, hath very full Employment for all his Industry and Watchfulness, and will find it no easy Matter so to prepare his Account, as that it shall prove satisfactory, and fit to bear Examination. How much greater Care must be incumbent upon him, who is accountable, in a very great Degree, not only for his own Actions, but for those of Multitudes of others also? who must answer for that Wickedness, which he either did not prevent by his Vigilance, or correct by his Justice, which his Example led, or his Remissness encouraged others to commit? He who states his Accounts in this Manner will learn, that every Advance he makes in Power is a new Motive to induce him to be humble, to encrease his

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his Application and Vigilance, and to teach him to pray to God for his Assistance to enable him rightly to use that Authority, which his Providence hath called him to, that he may do good to all in it, and, while he rules over Men, may not be wanting in his Obedience and Service to God.

THESE are the Sentiments which Governors who duly consider the Purposes for which they are made such, will not fail to entertain; and great will be the Advantages, which will redound from such Considerations to themselves, and to those committed to their Care. For those who are under them will be sure to enjoy all those Benefits which good Governors are the Instruments of conveying to Mankind; and the Rulers themselves, while they apply themselves to do all the Good they can for others, will adorn their own high

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high Station, encrease their own Honour and Authority; advance the Glory of God; and be publick Blessings to Mankind.

It remains for me in the

Third and Last Place, to consider what Account ought to be made of Rulers, by those, who are placed under them, and enjoy the Benefit of their Authority.

AND here it will not be improper to observe again, that my Text is not intended for any Direction to other Men, what Account they are to make of them, however it may be proper for Rulers to consider it, as a Caution to themselves. The very same Reasons which conclude for their thinking humbly of themselves, and for disposing them to a careful Discharge of their Office, are as convincing for our thinking of them, in a very different Manner, and regarding them

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them accordingly. They are raised above the common Rank of Mankind for the Benefit of it: They are continually to labour to procure that Benefit, to preserve Peace; to encourage and protect Goodness, to discountenance and cut off such Workers of Iniquity, as would disturb the Quiet of the World, and injure the Persons, and Estates of the rest of Mankind. To promote these noble and advantageous Ends, they are constantly to be employed as God's Servants; and the rest of the World enjoys the Ease, Repose, and Security which is obtained by their Labours, and oftentimes with their Danger and Damage. What other Account then can we make of good Governors, than to esteem, and to style them (not by Way of Flattery, as among the Heathens, but in the best and most proper Sense of the Word) Benefactors: To look upon
them

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them as the *Ministers of God* for the Good of the World; to pay unfeigned Reverence to their Persons; cheerful and ready Obedience to their Laws; and willingly to be subservient to them, in answering the beneficial Ends, for which their Authority was appointed of God.

Would we in Obedience to the Word of God pay Honour to whom Honour is due? we may in my Text learn who those are. For in our Saviour's Scale of Christian Dignity we find those are first, who are the *Servants of all*, who take care for all, and by whose Labours the general Good is sought and promoted. To these accordingly the holy Scriptures require our Subjection and Obedience, and as thereupon it is our Duty to pay it, so, in Consideration of the Peace, and Security, with the many other great Advantages, which are conveyed and preserved to us by
their

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their Means, we should pay that Reverence, and Submission, willingly, and thankfully.

Secondly, AND to conclude. While we consider the Labours and Difficulties with which they are beset and burthened in the Discharge of an Office intended for our own Benefit, and Advantage; we should be careful, as to avoid whatever might tend to render their Performance still more burthensome to them, so to pray to God, that he would please to protect, and to assist them. This we are bound to do, both because such is the Will of God, who hath expressly by his Apostle St. Paul commanded, that *Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks be made, as for all Men, so for Kings, and for all that are in Authority.* 1 TIM. ii. 1, 2. And also because of the important Concern we have in it our selves; because our leading

quiet

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quiet, and peaceable Lives, in all Godliness and Honesty, so much depends upon his giving them Grace to execute Justice, and to maintain Truth.

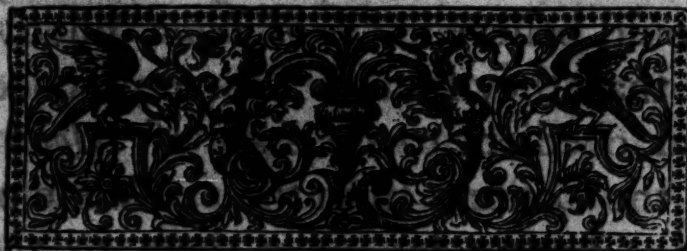
LET us therefore constantly put up our fervent Prayers to the Throne of God, and beseech him to bless all that are in Authority, our Sovereign Lord the King, the Royal Family, and all who under him, and for him administer Justice to the Punishment of Wickedness and Vice, and to the Maintenance of true Religion and Virtue; that God would direct, and prosper their Labours, to the Good of his People upon Earth, and reward them hereafter with everlasting Honours, in the Kingdom of Glory, for the Sake of his blessed Son *Jesus Christ*, our only Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

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of his People upon Earth, and re-
ward them hereafter with everlasting
Honours, in the Kingdom of Glory,
for the sake of his blessed son Jesus
Christ, our only Lord and Saviour.

SERMON



SERMON X.

GAL. IV. 29.

*But as then he that was born after the
Flesh persecuted him that was born
after the Spirit, even so it is now.*



THE Apostle St *Paul* having
before in this Epistle used
several Arguments to con-
vince the *Galatians* of the
Error they were in, while they
P 2 thought

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thought that it was necessary in order to Salvation, not only that they should believe in *Christ Jesus*, but also that they should be circumcised and obedient to the Law of *Moses*; in the Context from the 21st Verse of this Chapter he refers them to the Law itself for their better Information concerning the Nature of the two Covenants; that of the New Testament into which they were already entred by and through Faith, and that of the Old which they were perswaded by some to enter into by Circumcision and Obedience to the *Mosaical* Institution. He tells them here, that the one of these Covenants hath antiquated and superseded the other; and that they who are admitted to the Privileges of the better, have no Occasion to trouble themselves with the Burdens and Inconveniences of the worse: He shews from the Natures of the Covenants

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nants themselves that they are inconsistent with one another, as inconsistent as Liberty and Servitude, which are two Conditions that no one can be in at the same Time: And this he doth by referring them to the Account of the Family of the Patriarch *Abraham*, to whom the Promise of both these Covenants was made, and in the Condition of whose two Sons, the Nature of them both is severally described. For as the one of these two Sons, *Ismael* was born in Servitude and of a Bond-Woman, and that after the Flesh, after the usual and ordinary Course of Nature, and without the Intervention of any extraordinary and particular Promise; and as the other of them, *Isaac* was born of a free Woman, after the Spirit, or by Virtue of a Promise of God and in an extraordinary Manner: So of the two Covenants, the one was productive

P 3

of

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of a servile Obedience to a burdensome Law, after the Flesh, or that was to be performed by an outward Observation of such Rules, as rather affected the Bodies of Men, and circumscribed their Practices, than influenced their Souls and determined their Affections. The other tends to make them free, and their Compliance with the Terms of it such as is consistent with the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God, while by the Advantages it offers and the Assistance it affords, it disposes and enables Men willingly and freely to perform what is required on their Parts to the fulfilling of it. A further Parallel between the immediate Children of Abraham, and the Circumstances which his more remote Posterity were to be drawn in, is in the Words of my Text, *but as then he that was born after the Flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.*

In

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In discoursing further upon which Words, I shall

I. *First* ENQUIRE more fully, what is meant by being born after the Flesh, and what by being born after the Spirit.

II. *Secondly*, I SHALL examine upon what Account it is said, that he that was born after the Flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit.

III. *Thirdly*, I SHALL assign some Reasons of that Enmity which there is between one of these Sorts of Men here spoken of, and the other.

I. *First*, I AM to enquire what is meant by being born after the Flesh, and what by being born after the Spirit.

WHAT the primary Meaning of these Expressions in this Place is, I

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have already given an Account: That by him that was born after the Flesh is understood *Ishmael*, the eldest Son of *Abraham*, who is said to be born after the Flesh, because there was nothing in his Birth extraordinary, or beside the common Course of Nature; whereas *Isaac* was by Promise and born after the Spirit, out of the usual Course of Nature, and by an extraordinary Effect of the Power of God.

BUT besides these that were born one after the Flesh and the other after the Spirit, it seems, as the Text implies, there are others that are born so now. And these in the Apostle's Time and whom he intended in this Place, were those that adhered to the Law of *Moses*, and those who professed the Faith of *Christ*. The Reasons for which he applies these Expressions to them occur in the Context in the 25th and 26th Verses,

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ses, where we are told that *Agar answereth to the Jerusalem that then was,* or to the *Jewish Religion*, and was then in Bondage with her Children; whereas the Christian Church, which is *the Mother of us all*, is the *spiritual Jerusalem which is above, which is free.* And the peculiar Genius and Temper of these different Dispensations do, as I have already shewn, make these Expressions in my Text very applicable to the Persons here designed by them; do make it proper to say of those that placed their whole Religion without them, and in bodily Performances, and who were actuated by the Hopes and Fears of such Things principally, as concerned only their temporal Advantages or Inconveniencies, that they *were born after the Flesh*; that the Covenant or Religion they were admitted into, was as understood by them, *carnal and gendred to Bondage*: Whereas on the

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the other hand, those might truly be said to *be born after the Spirit*, who being regenerate by the Power of the Holy Ghost, and admitted into the Number of the Children of God, do form their Lives by the Direction of his Spirit, and have their Affections fixed, and all their Endeavours determined to the spiritual Enjoyment of that God, whom they are taught to worship *in Spirit and in Truth*. John 4. 23.

BUT besides what hath been already said to shew who are intended by the different Expressions in my Text, there is still a further Distinction to be made in order to bring this Subject to have any relation to the Times wherein we live. And among Christians themselves there is a Difference; and that is between such as believe and live according to the Gospel of *Christ*, and those who have nothing else to denominate them Christians, except a Name given them

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them in their Baptism, but who by a constant and universal Breach of the Terms of that beneficial Covenant into which they were then admitted, do sufficiently shew, that they are no Way concerned or solicitous, whether they continue in it or not. These by an unhappy Regeneration having *begun in the Spirit* do take pains to *be born again after the Flesh*; and preferring Nature to the Grace of God, and the Dictates of it, which they call the Rules of Reason, to the Revelation which he hath made of himself and of his Will, they become such natural Men as the Apostle speaks of 1 COR. ii. 14. *Who receive not the Things of the Spirit of God: For they are Foolishness unto them; neither can they know them, for they are spiritually discerned.*

THAT it may appear, that a Man is truly born again after the Spirit,
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it is necessary, not only that his Actions be such as are agreeable to the Directions of it, but also that his Belief from which those Actions ought to spring, be according to the Truths, which it hath revealed: Into which Truths while he searches, he ought to proceed by different Rules from those by which his Reason is directed, when it is employed about Things of a different Nature. For he that in spiritual Matters will proceed after a natural Method, that will allow his Reason to usurp a Power of judging in Things that lie out of its Reach, and form his Opinions concerning invisible Things and inconceivable Truths, not by the Accounts worthy of Belief which are given of them by others, but according to what he is able to discover of them himself; this Man shews that he is not born of the Spirit, but that he is in his natural State; that he hath no higher

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er Principle than that of Nature either to influence his Practice or to assist his Reason and rectify his Belief. Whereas he that submits his Reason, conscious to itself of its own Insufficiency, to the superior Authority of Revelation, and having gained Satisfaction concerning the Divine Original of it is solicitous for the rest only, how to understand its Meaning that he may escape Error himself, without taking upon him to look for Errors or Mistakes in it, or to disallow its Truths, because they are not always such as his Reason can determine of; he that can be content to supply with Faith the Deficiency of his Knowledge, and to believe God always, though he is not always able to comprehend him; he that can believe and act upon Motives of a spiritual Nature, that can walk by Faith and not by Sight, and can obey God now in Hope of enjoying him hereafter,

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after, such a one is truly *born after the Spirit and not after the Flesh*, because in his Opinions, Actions and Expectations he is not determined by any thing but what is purely spiritual, but what is very different from that which would influence him should he listen to the Voice of Nature only, and act according to the common Tendency of it.

HAVING in the first Place given an Account of what is meant by being born after the Flesh and being born after the Spirit, I proceed

II. *Secondly*, To examine upon what Account it is said, that he that was born after the Flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit.

As this hath relation to the History of *Ishmael* and *Isaac*, we have some Account of it in GEN. xxi. 9. where we read that *Sarah saw the Son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she*

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she had born unto Abraham, mocking. I shall not stand to give you the Conjectures, for surely they can be no more, concerning this Mocking what it was; it shall suffice me to observe that what is there called *Mocking* is the same with that which the Apostle in my Text calls *Persecution*. This ill Treatment *Ishmael* offered to *Isaac*; this the Jews, here designed by the Apostle, offered to the first Christians; and this Usage they that are still *born after the Spirit* do find from *them that are born after the Flesh*. It is to be supposed that the Mockery with which *Ishmael* abused *Isaac* was of a very grievous and injurious Nature, since it was so deeply resented and so severely punished; since so good a Man as *Abraham* did thereupon, and that not without express Direction from God himself, expel his own and eldest Son with the Mother that bare him from his House

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House and Presence, and sent them to wander and to suffer the Extremity of Want in the Wilderness.

NOR did the Persecution with which the *Jews* in *St. Paul's* Time afflicted the Christians come at all short of this whatever it was; but exceeded it very far as he himself well knew by his own Experience both as an Actor and a Sufferer; as he had assisted at the Stoning of *Stephen*, and as he had been stoned himself for the Sake of that Faith, of which he was first an active Persecutor, and afterwards an indefatigable and courageous Defender, and Martyr for.

AND so far as the two Words made use of, that in the History of the Old Testament and that in the Application of it in the New, may serve to express the same Thing, it may be said still, that as then he that was born after the Flesh mocked him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is

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is now: Nothing being a more common Topick of scornful and supercilious Mockery and Contempt than the Belief of the Truths of Christianity with some, or a Life led according to the Fear of God, a Zeal for his Honour, and a strict Adherence to what he hath made the Duty of Mankind is with others. And that this may be reckoned Persecution will not require much Proof; since all evil Treatment which a Man undergoes for the Sake, of God and the Defence of his Truth, and the Maintenance of his Honour, is deservedly accounted Persecution. Perhaps indeed, (and may God be ever praised, who in Mercy hath put it out of the Power of his Enemies to proceed so far) there is no Loss of Life, there is no bodily Punishment sustained, nor any Damage done to Mens Estates in this Sort of Persecution; but there is that, which it

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may

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may be is not less grievous than any of these. To be treated with Despight and Scorn is what is not easily digested by those who have any Regard to Honour or Esteem: But although by the Help of truly Christian Philosophy a Man may be able to set himself above all Disturbance upon this Account, and with the Apostles ACTS v. 41. can have so true a Sense of what he owes to God as that he can *rejoice, that he is counted worthy to suffer Shame for the Name of Christ*, yet with what Temper can he endure to see Dishonour done to God himself, to see his Truths denied and ridiculed, his Laws broken and trodden under Foot, his Name profaned by vain and senseless Oaths and Imprecations, fatal only to those who use them, and his Religion with all that belongs to it made a Subject of irreverent Laughter, and subservient to the Mirth of such, as are not wise

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wise enough to make their Pleasures consistent with their Duty, nor their Enjoyment of the Gifts of God with the Gratitude they ought to return to him for them? Doubtless to those who have any Sense of the Majesty of God, any Apprehension of the Reverence due to him, or any Conviction upon their Minds of the Obligations they are under to maintain and assert his Truths and his Honour, it must be very grievous to know and see such Things, and to be so far from being able to prevail upon those who glory in them to leave them off, that they expose themselves to certain ill Usage from them by so much as offering at it. For in this respect the Parallel holds exactly; and as formerly *he that was born after the Flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.* Nor can any one take a more probable Course to lay himself open to Scorn

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and

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and Hatred, than by interesting himself in the Cause of God, and discovering his Disapprobation, his Detestation and Abhorrence of those Sins, that most immediately dishonour God.

I HAVE now in the second Place shewn upon what Account it is said in my Text that, *he that was born after the Flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit*, and that as he did *then*, even so he doth *now*. I come in the

III. *Third* Place to assign some Reasons of that Enmity which one of these Sorts of Men bear to the other. And

First, In the Case of those primarily designed in the Text it is evident, that their Malice arose from Envy. Thus in the Case of *Ishmael*; the Hatred he shewed may be supposed to have taken its Beginning from his
envying

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envying *Isaac* for those Advantages which the Promises of God and the Right of his Mother gave him over himself. To be so unexpectedly defeated of so great a Hope as the inheriting not only the large Substance which *Abraham* was possessed of at the present, but also of the more valuable Reversion of those Blessings which were promised by Almighty God to his Posterity, was a Disappointment which could hardly fail of being a Foundation of irreconcilable Hatred against him who was the Occasion of it. And as the Advantage which his more advanced Strength and Knowledge gave him over his Brother, put it into his Power to use him ill, so we find that he did not fail to employ it to that Purpose by *persecuting* him, who though coming after him was preferred before him.

IN like Manner, and for a Reason much the same, did the *Jews* treat

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the Followers of *Christ*: These were by the Mercy of God, and very contrary to the Expectation of the *Jews*, made Heirs of those Promises, which the *Jews* had in Imagination entitled themselves to exclusively of all others, and were, as the Apostle in the 31st Verse of this Chapter expresses it, *Children of the Free-Woman*: Whereas the *Jews* as such were still in the Bondage they were born to, under the Burden of the Law, and excluded from the Inheritance of the Children of God, to which they could lay no Claim by the Law, nor be entitled to any otherwise than by becoming Christians. But the Christians could not assert these Truths without drawing upon themselves the Envy of the *Jews*, who would not contentedly and quietly be deprived of such distinguishing Prerogatives as they thought themselves above all others to be possessed of,

nor

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nor easily be reconciled to such as claimed a higher Place in God's Favour, and a better and more certain Right to his Promises, than they would allow them to have. Agreeably to this, their Carriage towards the Christians shewed how fixed and invincible Hatred they bore to them: They, like *Ishmael*, made use of their own more confirmed Strength to mock and to oppress the Infancy of Christianity, and endeavoured by all their Power and Artifice to stop its Growth and oppose its Progress. And still the same Reason prevails, and that Men are provoked to use those ill who speak, and live, and hope, according to the Rules and Directions of Religion, is to be attributed to that envious Indignation with which they are provoked against all that are or endeavour to be better, and happier, and wiser, than they will give themselves

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themselves the Trouble or take the Pains to be. A

Second Reason of this may be the Disparity and Dissimilitude which there is between these two Sorts of Men.

THERE is in most Men that innate Pride and Jealousy for their own Honour and Perfection, that they are disposed to think ill of, or to despise, all that do not agree with them both in Practice and Opinion: They look upon every Disagreement from them as a condemning of that which they approve, and by Consequence as a calling into Question either their Understanding or their Integrity. And this is at the Bottom the Reason for which Men do not only think those who entertain different Sentiments from theirs to be in the Wrong, which they must do, except they will allow themselves to be so, but they find themselves provoked to use them ill
and

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and to treat them as Enemies to their Persons, as well as to their Opinions. This Observation will be found to hold true throughout the general Practice of the World: To refuse the Advice of any one who offers it, that is, not to submit your own Judgment to his, is hardly ever taken otherwise than ill: To differ in any the minutest Circumstance from those among whom you are, is reckoned singular and conceited; nor can the Civility due to Strangers of other Nations preserve them from being abused and derided, because of their Habits, or Gestures, or Languages, which are different from our own. Nor doth even Religion itself so far overcome and correct this Pride of Nature, but that it may be more especially taken Notice of in the Behaviour of the Professors of it towards one another upon the Account I am speaking of. How great then must the
Difference

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Difference be reckoned between those, who do not, like the others I have been speaking of, only vary one from another in a few Things, and those in themselves of no very high Moment and Importance, but in the whole Institution and Conduct of their Life? They who act by Principles entirely different, and upon different Ends, and by the Brightness and Lustre of their Virtue discover the Deformity and Unreasonableness of the contrary Practices, must expect a heavy Load of Malice from the Quarter of those whose Wickedness they expose, and whose ill Lives they condemn, by the most effectual and convincing Argument of their own Goodness and Obedience to the Will of God. Nor, on the other Hand are they less offended and displeased at the Dishonour offered to God by those that refuse to conform their Lives to his Commandments, nor can they

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they dissemble their Disallowance and Detestation of whatever tends to the Diminution of the Glory of God. While therefore there is so much Ground of Difference, it is to be expected, that the War between the Flesh and the Spirit should continue; that the one of them should lust against the other; and that Men by declaring their Dislike of the Wickedness of others should provoke them to become their Enemies, and as often as lies in their Power to use them despightfully and persecute them.

THE last Reason I shall assign of this shall be, the wrong Apprehensions Men have of Things while they do not enquire into them after a right Manner.

To make Enquiries into the Truths of Religion without due Preparation and a sincere Desire of being made better and wiser by so doing, is the Way never to know or find what they

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they seek after. ¶ Fervent Prayer and an humble Soul, sensible of its own Imperfection and Want of Instruction, should fit and qualify us to study the Word of God; but they who without due Reverence and Awe set themselves to this Work, will not attain to any saving Knowledge of those Things *which are only spiritually to be discerned.* And the Want of such Knowledge is the Cause for which the Depth of the Divine Wisdom appears, as the Apostle tells us, 1 COR. ii. 14. to be *Foolishness* to those who do not understand the true Value of it. To such, Errors, Absurdities and Contradictions seem to manifest themselves; and they think they have good Reason to divert themselves by jeering and ridiculing the Ignorance and Stupidity of those who receive with all Veneration as divine Truths those Things, which to their own supposed clearer and more penetrating
Eyes

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Eyes appear to be false and unworthy of any Belief.

THIS is the Case of the present Age; at which we are the less to wonder, because we find, that as it is *now*, that they which *are born after the Flesh*, and own no higher Principle to be led by, than their own uncertain and changeable Reason, do mock and despise those that are *born after the Spirit*, and derive their Instructions from him, and fashion their Lives according to them, so it hath always been.

LET therefore this Consideration serve to fortify us against all Persecution of this Sort, that we have this Reason added to all the others we before had to think and be assured that we are in the right; that we find the same Treatment from those whom we know to be in the Wrong, which hath all along been offered to Truth and to Goodness.

Let

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Let this encourage us to persevere in the Profession of Religion, and in a Practice answerable to it; though thereupon we are obliged to make our Way through the Scorn or Envy of those who are unwilling any should have more Concern for their eternal Welfare, than they themselves do appear to have: For it is by this Way, how strait soever it may be, that we must come to that *Jerusalem which is above, which is the Mother of us all*, and to the Participation of his Glories, who having before us *despised the Shame, is now set down at the right Hand of the Throne of God.*

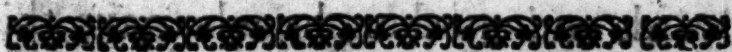


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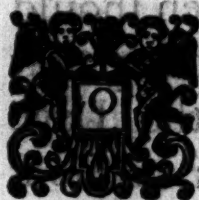


SERMON XI.



I JOH. IV. 21.

And this Commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his Brother also.



UR blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who was himself the truest Lover of Mankind, hath as we are here taught, commanded that Men, especially such

as

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as would approve themselves his true Disciples, should love one another. But as, by Reason of the Wickedness, or at best the Infirmities and Frailties of human Nature, it is very difficult to fix a good Foundation for this mutual Love; and as the Offences and Provocations which are continually arising among Men, are perpetually disturbing and impairing their Kindness and Good-Will towards one another, he who gave this Commandment knew that it would be but very ill obeyed, unless together with the Authority of him who enjoined it, very powerful and persuasive Motives should concur to dispose them to do what he required of them. He hath therefore most effectually provided that Men should love one another, by founding that their mutual Love upon the Love which they all should bear to God, and declaring that one of these is inseparable

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separable from the other and the only satisfactory Proof of it: By teaching the World, that *he who loveth God should love his Brother also, and that he who loveth not his Brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen.* Our Love of God is the firmest Foundation for our Love of Man, and will support and maintain it when all other Reasons fail and lose their Force: This alone is unchangeable, as being settled upon Motives which are evermore the same: Whereas the other Motives which usually influence Men to love one another, are like Men themselves, variable and perishing, and must lose their Power upon every Alteration of that which they are derived from. If, for instance, these Motives rise from Interest, they fall with it: If they rise from Beauty of Body or Excellency of Mind, they decay with those fleeting and short-lived

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lived Advantages: If they are grounded upon Similitude and Agreement of Temper and Inclinations, they vanish as soon as any Change appears in those Things which are so very subject to change, and which so seldom continue for any Time the same. This is evidently the Case with respect to all human Motives, all Reasons of this World for Love among Men: And therefore we are not to wonder, when we see how shortlived the Friendships and how empty the Professions of Love are which Men usually make one among another.

BUT the Motives which are drawn for mutual Love among Men from the Love which they all ought alike to bear to God, are of quite another Nature: These are always the same, always in full Power; and he that understands that it is his Duty to God that he should love his Brother, and that he must either love his Brother
or

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or not love God, will find himself always, and under all Changes and Alterations that may befall himself or others, still equally bound to entertain and act agreeably to this Love of Man, because he is always under the same immutable Obligations to love God.

It is my Design in this Discourse to consider

I. *First*, On what Accounts we are bound to love God: And

II. *Secondly*, How the Duty of loving our Brother is founded upon, and to be deduced from, our Love of God.

I. *First*, THE Obligations we lie under to love God are so numerous and so visible, that they leave no Room for any Need of Argument to convince Men of their Duty in this respect. And accordingly the Apo-

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He takes it for granted, that Men know they ought to love God, and only applies himself to prove from that, as from an acknowledged Principle, that they ought to love one another.

THE most reasonable and most effectual Motives to Love are, either Apprehensions of the Excellency of that which is beloved, or a grateful Sense of Benefits which we have received, which we do enjoy, or which we are encouraged to hope for from it: For which Reasons God is the noblest and properest Object we can fix our Love upon, and hath the justest Claim to it. I shall not insist upon the infinite Excellency of God in himself, who as he is the Author and Giver of every Thing that is perfect, must be possessed of all Perfections. His Power, his Wisdom and his Majesty considered in themselves are proper Objects of our
Admi-

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Admiration, of our awful Adoration. But his Bounty, his loving Kindness, his Mercy and Condescension are what more forcibly attract our Love, and encourage us to place it upon him, who, as we by blessed and perpetual Experience are assured, first loved us, and continues to manifest his Love to us.

LET us, as we often ought to do, employ ourselves in considering some of the Instances of God's Love to us, that we may the better understand, how great Love we should bear to him. Let us first consider what distinguish'd Love he shewed to us in making us Men. He made us in his own Image; He gave us reasonable and immortal Souls, erect and wonderful Bodies, and sent us into the World which he had given to us, adorned with Innocence and possessed of Happiness. Let us consider the first Condition of our first Pa-

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rents which is the Condition God was graciously pleased to design us all for: And from thence learn what grateful Love we ought to bear to God, from that which we may reasonably conclude they bore to him, while they continued innocent. When they found themselves in the compleat Enjoyment of so many Blessings, brought into Life out of Nothing, placed in so happy and exalted a State, as not only to have the Possession and Dominion of a whole World bestowed upon them, but to be honoured with the Communion and Friendship of their great Creator; how must their Hearts be filled with the Love and their Mouths with the Praises of their God, who had been so good and gracious to them! But this Love was not strong enough to guard them against the Subtlety of the Devil, who found Means to make them forget it, and to prove ungrate-
ful

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ful and disobedient, and in Consequence thereof miserable. Let us therefore consider, whether besides the Reasons which *they* had to love God, *we* have not others of more Force, and which ought to be sufficient to prevail upon us to continue in that Love, and not to be drawn from it by Temptations of any Kind which we may be solicited by. Let us consider ourselves not only as the created, but as *the redeemed of the Lord*; as those whom notwithstanding their Offences against him, he hath *saved from Destruction, and crowned with loving Kindness and tender Mercies*. To have made us out of Nothing, and to have loved those whom he had made excellently good, is such a Proof of the Goodness of God, as ought to convince us, that it is our Duty to love him and to serve him. But that after we had rebelled against him and, provoked

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his just Displeasure: After we had shewn ourselves ungrateful to him, and had fallen from that Goodness in which he had made us, he should still continue to regard us with Compassion, *to forgive us all our Sins and to heal all our Infirmities*, to rescue us from the Misery we are fallen into, and to make it possible for us to attain to a more perfect Happiness and a nearer Union with him than what we at the first enjoyed; all this manifests his Love to us to be without Bounds, and our Obligations to return Love to him for it to be indispensable, and what we ought evermore to acknowledge and to be under the Influence of. It is in this Particular, that God himself especially *commends his Love towards us, in that while we were yet Sinners, when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to him.* Nor doth this Reconciliation itself more clearly manifest the
 Love

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Love of God to us, than the Means by which it was effected. When no other Atonement was of sufficient Value to give Satisfaction to the Justice and Majesty of God for the Sins of a wicked and miserable World, God so loved us, that he gave his Son to bear our Punishment, to take away our Guilt, to deliver us from his Wrath, and to restore us to his Favour. *In this was manifested the Love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him* I JOH. iv. 9. *that we might live through him*; that through him we might be delivered from the Death of Sin and Punishment, might be taught by his Doctrine, directed by his Example, and enabled by his Assistance *to live unto Righteousness and unto God*; to live that Life which he is the Author and Giver of, that Life of Holiness, which is well-pleasing to God in this World,

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World, and that Life of Happiness and Glory which is in his Presence and at his right Hand, in the World to come.

SUCH is the Love of God to us: And when we have as we ought duly considered it, it will dispose, it will constrain us to love him above all Things: We shall regard him not only as he is in himself the most perfect and excellent of all Beings, with Admiration, but as he is so gracious and beneficent to us, with Gratitude: We shall find and acknowledge him to be not only the most adorable, but the most amiable Object of our Thoughts and Desires, or in the more expressive and significant Words of St. John, *to be not only lovely, but Love itself.* 1 JOH. iv. 8.

THUS much may suffice for the first Part of my Discourse, in which I proposed to consider on what Accounts we are bound to love God.

I have

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I have only taken Notice of, such as are common to us all, as we are Men and as we are Christians, as we were created and redeemed by him; referring it to every one to recollect the manifold particular and personal Blessings, which God who preserves and provides for him hath bestowed upon him; and which justly demand particular Returns of Love and Gratitude to God from him. I shall now proceed in the

II. *Second* Place to shew how the Duty of loving our Brother is founded upon and may be deduced from the Love we bear to God.

For that it is so is evident, as from my Text, so from other Places of this Epistle. At the 11th Verse of the Chapter of which my Text is the Conclusion, we find this Inference made from the Love of God to us, which is the Ground of our Love to him:

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him: Beloved, *if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.* And at the Verse immediately going before the Text, we see how inseparable the Love of Man is from the Love we bear to God; and how false our Pretensions to the latter of these are, if we are destitute of the former. *If a Man say, I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a Liar: For he that loveth not his Brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* It will not be difficult to assign Reasons for this, and to make it very apparent, that if we do really love God, we shall love our Brother also. As

First, if we love God we shall love that which he loveth. Every Man is the beloved Work of God, is what was made by the Hand and purchased by the Blood of *Christ*, who created and redeemed all Mankind. But can we then have no Value for, no
Good-Will

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Good-Will to that which is so dear to God and so beloved by him, and at the same Time with any Truth affirm that God is beloved by us? Let us compute this by our common Estimate of Love among ourselves, and consider whether we should be willing to believe any one to bear Good-Will towards us, who should shew Hatred to or have no Value or Regard for that which he knew of all Things to be best beloved by us?

Secondly, another Reason, for which if we love God we shall love our Brother also, is, because our Love to our Brother is the best Way we can take to manifest, to make it evident that our Love to God is true and undissembled.

WORDS alone and mere Professions are not enough for this Purpose: It is easy for any one to pretend, to say that he loves God, whether he loves him or not. But he that loves the

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the rest of Mankind because they are the Work of God and made after his Likeness: He that regards and loves them as his Brethren, because they all have the same Father with himself: He that loves them because God hath loved them and *laid down his Life for them*; that Man takes the most effectual Course to prove that Love, which he saith he bears to God, to be sincere, while in what he does to God's Creatures he does it upon his Account; and places those Benefits and good Deeds upon them, which he cannot bestow upon God, and who stands in no Need of them. But

Thirdly, Which puts what I am speaking to in the fullest Light, God himself hath expressly declared, that if we love him we must love our Brother also.

In the next Chapter after my Text at the third Verse we are told what
the

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the Love of God is. *This is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments.* And in my Text we find, that this Commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his Brother also. The inseparable Connexion between the Love of God and the Love of our Neighbour is here written so plainly, that he who runs may read it: Nor doth it need, neither is it capable of further Evidence than what it carries with it.

In the former Part of this Discourse, it was my Business to prove, that we are obliged to love God by every Thing that can lay Claim to our Love. Do we desire to know what it is to love God? *This is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments.* Would we know what the Commandment, the peculiar, the distinguished Commandment is? *This is the Commandment which we have from him, that he who loveth God,*

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God, love his Brother also. And certainly this Commandment is not, ought not to be *grievous*, to be at all disagreeable to us in itself or burthen some in our Obedience to it.

HAD God required some great and difficult Thing from us in Return for the innumerable inestimable Blessings which his Love hath bestowed upon us, should we not have done it? how much more and more willingly ought we to obey him, when even his Commandments themselves are fresh Proofs of his Love to us; when it is for our own Interest and Benefit and in Compliance with that Sympathy and Benevolence which is a Part of our very Composition, and is therefore very properly as well as commonly styled *Humanity* and *Good-Nature*, that we should love one another.

LET every one therefore, who is convinced of his Duty to love God
from

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from a Sense of his Goodness in himself and of his Goodness to him, be taught how he may certainly and without any Danger of being deceived, whether he loves God or whether he does not. Does he love his Brother and act according to the genuine Dictates of real Good-Will in his Inclinations towards him and in his Dealings with him? Whether he does thus or not, he will best judge, if he compares his own Love with the Love of God to him, for that is the Direction of the Apostle, that we should *love one another as God hath loved us.* God hath given us whatever he saw us to stand in Need of, hath plentifully provided Supplies for all our Necessities and furnished us with all that can contribute to our Support and Well-being. Therefore *whofo hath this World's Good and seeth his Brother have Need, and shutteth up his Bowels of Compassion from him, how*
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dwelleth

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dwelleth the Love of God in him?

1 JOH. iii. 16. God, when offended and provoked to just Wrath by our Sins against him, forgave us and became reconciled to us; if we then love God, we shall forgive our offending Brethren for his Sake, *as God for Christ's Sake hath forgiven us.*

To conclude: God for our Benefit, for our Assistance, for our Salvation hath given us his Word and hath sent his Son and his Servants to teach us our Duty, to reprove our Failings, to correct our Miscarriages, to strengthen and aid us in all our Endeavours, to please him and to be for ever happy with him. Let us in like Manner use the Powers which he hath given us, in advancing the spiritual Welfare of our Brethren: Let us further and encourage whatever we find in them that is already good, and let us with Charity and a *sincere Desire* of their eternal Interest study

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study to prevent and amend whatever may be amiss in them and dangerous or destructive to them: Let us, in order to these Ends, to our Endeavours join our ardent Prayers to God, and beg of him for the Sake of his dear Son *Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us*, that he would save those whom he hath created and redeemed, and that he would advance those to his Happiness in Heaven, to whom he has shewed so much loving Kindness upon Earth.



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dear Son Jesus Christ, who loved us
and gave himself for us, that he would
have those whom he hath created and
redeemed, and that he would ad-
vance those to his Happiness in Hea-
ven, to whom he has shewed so much
loving Kindness upon Earth.

SERMON



SERMON XII.



ROM. XII. Part of the 16th Verse.

*Be not wise in your own Con-
cepts.*



ST Paul having at large in
the former Part of this
Epistle delivered and ex-
plained the Principles of
the Christian Faith and the Grounds
of

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of our Hope, proceeds in this Chapter to lay down Rules of Practice, and most especially to recommend, as that without which he well knew all the rest would profit us nothing, sincere and undissembled Love and Charity. For a Foundation to what he saith to this Purpose and which may serve to shew the Reasonableness and Necessity of the Exercise of this Grace, he tells us at the 5th Verse of this Chapter and onwards, that whatever Difference there may be amongst us in Regard to the Rank we hold, and the Offices, and Uses to which we are put and serve in it, we are all alike Members of the Body of *Christ*, have all an equal Interest in him our Head, and a very strict relation to one another.

It is not possible to find an Argument more effectual to prove, how acceptable to our blessed Lord Unity amongst his Followers is, and how
indis-

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indispensably requisite it is to their own Well-Being and Tranquillity, and how inconsistent the contrary is with both of these. For while we look upon *Jesus Christ* to be the Head of this mystical Body the Church, we must look upon every Distemper and Disorder, much more every Disunion and Division among the Members of it, to be very highly displeasing and, and might we use such an Expression, grievous and painful to him; since we know experimentally, that in our own Bodies the least, the weakest and most remote Part cannot be crushed, diseased or cut off, but the Head feels the Hurt and sympathizes with it. And while we consider, that if *Christ* be our common Head, we must needs, as the Apostle expresses it in the 5th Verse of this Chapter, be likewise *Members one of another*, we shall readily apprehend, what Sentiments

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we ought to entertain of, and what Treatment we ought to afford to one another. Is any Part of our own Body ill at Ease, in what Manner do we deal with it? Are we used, because it puts the whole to Pain, or because the Swelling or Sores of it disfigure and render it noisom, to loath it, or to treat it roughly and harshly, or immediately to cut it off and cast it from us, not because it makes us to offend, but because it is offensive to us? No: The softest gentlest Means are judged more proper; all Tenderness is shewed to it; every Thing that can be thought of is tried to give Ease and to recover Soundness to it; nor can the Love we bear to it and the Desire we have to keep it, be overcome by any thing less than an evident and absolute Necessity of either parting with that, or losing all the rest of the Body with it. And even then the Body
thus

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thus preserved is always afterwards maimed and impaired both in its Use and Beauty, for Want of what is thus divided from it. And had we the same Esteem or Concern for the inestimably more valuable Body of *Christ* and its Members, which we have for our own, we should do by the Members of it, as we do for our own: We should not think any Part of that Body so mean, so inconsiderable, so worthless, as that it should not deserve the utmost of our Endeavours to preserve and to study the Welfare of it: We should not, because it doth not always contribute to our Ease and Ornament or because perhaps it may sometimes occasion Disquiet and Pain to us, be immediately for cutting it off; but we should first use all the gentle Methods we can think of, all the Lenitives, all the healing restoring Arts, all that may contribute to the Removal

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removal of the Pain without aggravating and inflaming it, or destroying that diseased Part in which it was lodged, and which, though it caused some Uneasiness to the rest of the Body, yet at the same Time laboured under and was afflicted with a much greater Proportion of Anguish and Torment in itself.

FURTHER; did every particular Christian regard himself as a Member, as one Part out of many of the Body of *Christ*, did he consider that any one Part when separated from the rest, whether by others or by itself, cannot long subsist, but must in a short Time, for Want of necessary Nourishment and Assistance, be wasted and come to Nothing; he would learn to have the same Regard and Concern for the Peace and Unity of the whole Body of *Christ*, which *Christ* expresses for each of his Members: He would be resoly dnot

to

SERMON XII. 267

to let every little Matter put him upon tearing and rending in funder that mystical Body of *Jesus*, which he was so tender of himself, as that, for the Sake and Benefit of it, he suffered his own natural Body to be broken, wounded and deprived of Life, he would not easily be brought to divide himself from that Body of which he hath all along been a Part, and from which he hath received Life and Nourishment; he would not cut himself off from that Body, which might indeed subsist distinct from him, but from which he could not be separated without Destruction to himself.

THESE are natural and easy Deductions, Arguments that are apparent and offer themselves to dispose every Christian to study how to maintain Love, Charity and Unity with all others, from the Consideration the Apostle makes Use of in the Context for that End, namely, that
all

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all Christian People of what Kind soever make up one Body of *Christ*, to which no one can bring Pain or Damage and from which no one can separate without causing Displeasure to the Head, which is *Christ*, Loss and Disturbance to the Body, which is the Church, and Guilt and at length Destruction to himself. Thus far therefore the Apostle's Argument reaches and concludes in the most cogent Manner, that true christian Charity is a Duty which cannot be performed without the most sincere and unalterable Regard to the whole Body of *Christ*, and expresses what amounts to thus much, that for any one to be the Cause of Trouble and Disorder to it, much more of Division and Schism in it and at the same Time to pretend to Christian Charity, is the same as if any one should profess a Tenderness to a Man's Body and yet should be ready upon any
small

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small or no Occasion to torment or to cut off and dismember without any Regret those Parts of it, which are necessary to its Service and Ornament.

THAT Unity and Love should continue amongst Christians is plain in Reason: But how well they do subsist and are preserved must be learnt by Experience, by which we are too sufficiently taught, that it is a much easier Matter to produce Proofs of the Necessity and Excellency, than Examples of the Exercise of Charity and of a strict and well established Union among the Members of *Christ's* Body. One of the great Causes of this I shall have Occasion to speak to presently, and shall now only say of them, that whatever they are they have such Power and Influence, as that neither the express Commands and even affectionate Intreaties of holy Scripture, nor Mens own acknowledged Conviction of Charity being

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being their Duty and that by the Discharge whereof they are to make known whether they are in Reality the Disciples of *Christ* or only so in Profession, are sufficient to put a Check upon their mischievous and destructive Effects. Of the Truth of this *St. Paul*, as appears from his Epistles, had abundant Experience; enough we may well suppose to put him upon searching after, and detecting the causes of it and providing proper Remedies against them. And this he doth as in many other Places so very particularly in my Text with its Context. He here goes to the Root of this Evil and determines, that Divisions and Breaches of Charity among Christians spring not so much from the Variety of their Sentiments about the Truth and right Understanding of Articles of Faith, as from the great Difference each Man is pleased to make in his own Opinion, between the Value of himself

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himself and of other Men. It is a Man's being *wise in his own Conceit* and *minding high Things*, that hinders him from according with and *condescending* to Men whom he reckons to be of *low Estate*; from having that due Consideration and charitable Regard for them; which is necessary to preserve Union among the several Members of *Christ's Body*, and without which some of them will be always uneasy, and account themselves treated by the others in a Manner very different from what they have a Right to expect from their Fellow-Members.

It is a Man's thinking of himself more highly than he ought to think, that gives him Sufficiency enough to set up himself and his own private Sentiments in Opposition to Things established, whether in Ecclesiastical or Civil Society, by mature Deliberation, universal Agreement and long continued

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continued Practice of all, or at least the greatest and best and wisest Part of the Body he is a Member of; and to which he doth manifest Injury as well as to himself, so long as he continues so very wise in his own Conceit.

IN order to shew the Excellency of this Precept of the Apostle which is the Subject of this Discourse, I shall, in what remains of it, endeavour as distinctly and evidently as I can, to prove that Self-Conceit is the principal Cause of all Division; that wherever good Agreement and Peace and Unity among Men is broken, be the Pretence what it will, the true Reason is Pride and a too high Opinion of themselves on one Part, if not, which is no uncommon Case, on both. And here it will not be improper to provide against one usual Mistake, which we are too apt to make in interpreting the Intent and Aim of Discourses

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Discourses of this Nature; and which is the Reason that they have no more Effect, and that we generally return from them in the same Disposition we were in before we heard them. What I mean is this: We are too apt to find out the Faults which are reprov'd, in any other Person rather than in ourselves: We presently fix upon some Man or Party of Men, and apply all that is said to them, and perhaps approve and applaud it the more, the more severe and acrimonious the Style is in which it is deliver'd; while, it may be, all the while, it is as much due to ourselves as to any body else; and if we would apply it to ourselves, might have a good Effect in our Conviction and Amendment. Let no one therefore put himself upon the unnecessary, unprofitable Work of finding out in his Imagination such others, as he may think this Precept of *St. Paul*

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a fit

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a fit Rebuke for: The Apostle did not intend by it so much to teach us how to think of others, as of ourselves; and it is only by applying it sincerely to ourselves, that we can ever receive any Benefit from the Direction which he gives us. For Instance:

LET every one consider what it can be, that in a Dispute about a Subject, the Truth of which perhaps can never be determined, or if it could, would be of no Value or Importance to himself or any Body else, what I say it can be, that in such an Argument works up his Passion into a Flame, and be perhaps a Cause of Hatred and Malice for ever after. It cannot be for the Sake of Truth and the Moment of the Question; for that is not worth it: But it is for the Honour of the Disputant's Understanding, that might suffer, should the Argument be given up; and that

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that a Man *is wise in his own Conceit*, is the true Cause for which he will not own himself mistaken; for Fear he should not be accounted as wise by others, as he is by himself.

THAT Disputes become endless as well as innumerable, that Parties and Divisions arise and are perpetuated, that Men prosecute one another with so much Bitterness and Rancour is, because each Side is too wise in its own Conceit to allow the other either Sense or Honesty: When perhaps all the Proof which either hath to give for such their Opinion, amounts only to this, they must needs be in the Wrong because they differ from us, and we are satisfied that we have more Wisdom and Understanding, than not to be in the right. Could but this Self-Sufficiency be something abated, could Men but once prevail upon themselves to think it not impossible for themselves as

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well as others to err and be mistaken; though Difference and Variety of Opinion would be taken away by that Means, yet the unchristian Manner of asserting and maintaining them would quickly cease. Men would then consider the Mistakes of others with that Tenderneſs and Compaſſion, which they would think allowable to their own: They would pity and be ſorry for thoſe whom they could not bring out of them, and would not find any Diſpoſition in themſelves to lay more Hardſhips upon thoſe, whom they looked upon as unhappy and unfortunate already.

It is very eaſy to ſhew, that Self-Conceit naturally leads to Diſagreement and Breach of Love and Unity, that this is the principal Source of Hereſies and Schiſms in the Church, and of ſeparate Interests and formed Diviſions in civil Society. What is it that can encourage any ſingle Perſon

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son to imagine, that he is able to discover those Secrets in Religion, to reconcile those Difficulties, and to comprehend those Mysteries, which are confessed by all others to be above their Reach; and whom the vain Attempts of so many before him, and the fatal Errors they have run into thereby, should have made less venturous, but a strong Possession and Opinion of his own superior Capacity and Abilities, but being much wiser than all the World besides in his own Conceit?

WHAT is it that begets and feeds Ambition in any one, that puts him upon aiming at great Things, and when he hath atchieved them, at greater still, but a fond Persuasion within himself of his being qualified better than other Men for the most weighty and difficult Matters, that there is Nothing so great but what he is equal to, or in other Words, but

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a Conceit within himself, that he is wise enough to direct and manage the Affairs of the rest of Mankind?

Do we then complain of and lament our Divisions, our Heats and Animosities, the Decay of Christian Love and Charity, all the troublesome and pernicious Consequences of it? Let every one search his own Heart, and consider, whether he be in a fit Disposition to contribute towards putting an End to all this. It is not contending with and labouring to confute others, that can ever put an End to Differences; these are the Means of perpetuating them to the End of the World. We must use our first Endeavours upon ourselves; we must learn to know, that others have the same Faculties of reasoning and judging, the same Right and Interest in temporal and spiritual Society, that we have; that if *they* be liable to Error, so are *we*; that no
Man,

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Man, who is a Member of the Body of *Christ*, or of the Community we belong to, is so worthless and inconsiderable, as not to deserve better Treatment and more Regard than any thing like disdainful Contempt or Hatred is consistent with: That we are each of us but one single Part, which as it cannot live out of the Body, so it ought not to be troublesome to the whole, while it is in it; nor ready upon every little Uneasiness to divide itself from it. This is what we are to learn, and thus it is we should think of others, as well as of ourselves: And we shall then take the best and most effectual Way we can to preserve the Unity of the Body of *Christ* and the Peace of the Society we have a Part in, when we think them more valuable, than that they should be broken and disturbed upon our single Account; when we do not think ourselves alone worth

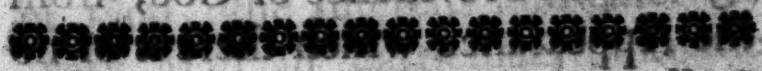
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more Regard than these; when, to conclude, we are all of the same Mind one towards another; when we mind not high Things, but condescend to Men of low Estate: when we are not wise in our own Conceits: any or Hatred is consistent with: That we are each of us but one single Part, which as it cannot live out of the Body, so it ought not to be troublesome to the whole, while it is in it; not ready to very little Un- calmness to it. This is what we should thus it is we should as well as of ourselves shall then take the best and most rational Way we can to preserve the Unity of the Body of Christ and the Peace of the Society we have a Part in, when we think them more valuable, than that they should be broken and disturbed upon our single Account; when we do not think ourselves alone worth more

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ECCLES. ix. Part of the 2^d Verse.

— And he that sweareth as he that feareth an Oath.

The whole Verse is as follows,

All Things come alike unto all, there is one Event to the Righteous and to the Wicked; to the Good, and to the Clean, and to the Unclean; to Him

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him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: As is the Good, so is the Sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an Oath.

IT is not at present intended to solve the Objection which is made in this Verse and the foregoing Context against the Providence of God, from the Appearance which there is of no Difference being made between the Evil and the Good, in the Events which befall them. I shall rather observe that the Words of my Text, as they are joined to the rest of the Verse, *He that sweareth and he that feareth an Oath*, are opposed to one another in such a Manner, as that the Character of the one is approved of and recommended, and that of the other is condemned and represented as wicked and sinful.

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THE Want of awful Regard to the sacred Nature of Oaths is a Crime too common and very loudly calls for effectual Discountenance and Rebuke; nor would it fail to meet with them, did but all Men sufficiently consider the Guilt and Consequences of such Swearing as is here intended; and of how much Importance it is, both with regard to the Honour of God, the Interests and Safety of every Man in particular, and the Preservation and Well-being of civil Society, that Men should fear an Oath.

FOR the better understanding of this, let it be enquired, what Swearing or what an Oath is; and then it will appear the more evidently in what Manner and upon what Occasions it may be used, and what Respect is due to it. By swearing, as we are to understand the Word in its commonly received and less restrained

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ed Sense, is intended the Calling upon God to be a Witness to the Truth of what we say; or the making use of his Name in order to the enforcing our Words, and demanding Belief to what we affirm or deny. An Oath therefore is to be esteemed as a solemn Act of Religion, God himself being always understood to be interested in it, and a Party to it: He is appealed to as a Witness to Truth and Avenger of Falsehood. And where this is duly considered Men will, as my Text expresses it, *fear* an Oath; they will regard it as a Thing too sacred to be used to any other than good Purposes, not even to them, but when the Use of it is absolutely necessary. This Fear will effectually restrain them from calling upon God, or using his Name to authorise and gain Credit to even Truth itself, where it is not of Importance enough to deserve so serious

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ous and dreadful an Attestation, or where it might be believed without an Oath, or when it would occasion no Damage, though it were not believed at all. How much more then were Men under the just Apprehensions and Influence of this Fear, would it prevent their Swearing to that which they are not certain of the Truth of, or which they even know to be false; and that not only where Fear, or Covetousness, or Malice and Revenge tempt them to do it, but even when they have no stronger Inducements to it, than Affectation, Custom, Pride and Impatience of being either contradicted or neglected?

THERE are indeed those, who are willing to make a great Difference (and doubtless there is so) between deliberate, false Swearing, and that which Men sometimes fall into thro' undesigned Mistake an inconsiderate Use

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Use of Swearing in their common Discourse: Not that they will affirm either of these to be lawful, but only that the one of them is much more criminal than the other.

It is not needful to settle the Measures of these Sins, or to shew by how many Degrees of Guilt they differ: It ought to be a sufficient Caution to us against both, that they are alike forbidden by the Laws of God and Man, however the Penalties of each may be different; that vain Swearing and Use of God's Name is as expressly forbidden as false Swearing; that God declares he will not hold either of them guiltless; and that the former hath too visible a Tendency towards the latter, and is the most natural and likely Means of making Men not afraid to fall into it.

It is this vain, common and inconsiderate Swearing, or, to come nearer to the Style of my Text, this
Swearing

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Swearing without fearing an Oath, without any Awe or Apprehension of the Reverence due to God in it, that I shall chiefly apply myself to consider, that it may appear both from the Nature of it and its Effects to be so great a Sin as that Men ought to fear it, and use their utmost Endeavours to keep themselves and others free from the Guilt of it; that it is a Sin, which is highly provoking to God, who therefore will not fail to punish it in another World; and that it justly deserves Punishment in the mean Time from those whom God raises to Power and Authority in this World, and who therefore as his Ministers and Substitutes are under peculiar Obligations to promote his Glory by asserting and maintaining the Honour due unto his Name.

First then, all unnecessary and therefore vain Swearing and Treatment

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ment of the Name of God is sinful and offensive to him in itself and in the Nature of it. *Holy and reverend is the Name of God*, as we find in *Psalms cxi* at the 9th Verse. As therefore his Name is *holy*, it is not to be profaned, it is never to be used, but in a sacred and religious Manner: And as it is *reverend*, Men in the Use of it ought always to be under awful Apprehensions and Dread of the infinite Majesty and Greatness of him, whose Name it is; therefore not to be mentioned slightly, familiarly or without Occasions of such Importance and Necessity as are worthy of it, and will warrant the appealing to it, and bringing it into Use. Accordingly as it is sufficiently known and hath been already observed, God declareth that if we *take it in vain*, not only if we use it to bad Purposes, but if we use it unnecessarily or irre-

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irreverently, He *will not hold us guiltless*. And indeed it is not possible, that we should be *guiltless* in his Sight and Account, if we break his express Law, and dishonour his holy Name and that with so much Contempt and Slight of his Greatness and Authority, as to do it without being able to alledge any Inducement that could reasonably incline us to it. It may not be improper to be something more particular in this Observation. If he that in common Conversation is guilty of using the Name of God in Oaths, should pretend that he doth it to gain Belief to what he sayes as true, it may justly be affirmed, that this cannot be a reasonable Inducement to him, because he cannot but know, that a common Swearer will no more be believed when in his Discourse he affirms any thing with an Oath, than when he affirms it without one; and

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that

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that for this visible Reason, because his common, vain, unnecessary Use of Oaths shewshim to have no Fear of an Oath, no Regard to the Sacredness of it, and therefore to be no Way restrained to Truth by any Awe and Apprehension of the Religion of it.

AGAIN: If he who being provoked to violent Anger discharges his Passion, as too many are apt to do, in prophane Oaths and still more execrable Curses and Imprecations shall say, that the Provocations he received were such as forced him to it, and that he was so urged as that he could not forbear it, let him before he accounts this a reasonable Excuse, find some Connexion between being angry at a Man and blaspheming God, or make it appear by what Kind of Operation the vain and unlawful Use of God's Name, whether in Oaths or Curses, gives Ease to his Disorder,

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Disorder, and restores him to his Temper. It is therefore a very heinous Aggravation of the Guilt of this Sin and what renders it most provoking to God, that in Defiance of his express Law, Contempt of his Greatness and Dishonour of his Majesty, Men even without any Temptation but from their own Pride and Rashness, shall without any Check allow themselves in the common and needless Abuse and Profanation of his Name. It is with Respect to this Sin that the wise Son of *Sirach* speaks in the xxiii^d Chapter of his excellent Book, at the 9th and in the following Verses. *Accustom not thy Mouth to Swearing: Neither use thy self to the Naming of the Holy One. For as a Servant that is continually beaten, shall not be without a blue Mark: So he that sweareth and nameth God continually shall not be faultless. A Man that useth much Swearing, shall be*

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filled

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be filled with Iniquity, and the Plague shall never depart from his House. And our blessed Saviour hath expressly condemned and utterly forbidden all Swearing in our common Conversation, as we may see MAT. XXV. 34, 37. *I say unto you, swear not at all: But let your Communication be yea, yea; nay, nay: For whatsoever is more than these, cometh of Evil.* In your Communication, your common Conversation, swear not at all, nor use any more earnest Affirmation or Denial, than a bare Repetition of the same again; *for whatsoever is more than these, whatsoever is used over and above these necessary Expressions, cometh, as it more properly is to be rendred, from the Evil One,* from him who is continually watching to lay hold upon every Opportunity, which our Impatience and Eagerness may give him to bring us into Guilt.

THUS

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THUS I have considered this Practice of vain or common Swearing, as it is in itself a needless and therefore an inexcusable Sin and Provocation to God, who hath declared that he *will not hold them guiltless*, who allow themselves in the Commission of it. It remains for me

Secondly, To enquire into the natural and almost necessary Consequences of this Sin, with respect to Men, whether single, or as united into civil Societies. And we shall apprehend what these are, if we consider the Purposes to which Oaths are used with regard to those.

AN Oath is the sole Caution which a Sovereign gives for his good Government; and also the Security which his Subjects give him for their Fidelity and Allegiance: The subordinate Magistrate is bound by Oaths to do Justice; and the Witness is un-

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der the same Obligation and gives no other Engagement to speak Truth.

So that breaking in upon the Religion of an Oath, and taking away from Men the *Fear* of it, is the readiest Way to throw Mankind into Confusion, Anarchy, and all the Mischiefs that will inevitably follow upon an utter Dissolution of all Rule and Administration of Justice and Government. But certainly the readiest Way to destroy and put an End to any Reverence and Regard to the sacred and awful Nature of Oaths, is Mens using them idly, wantonly, unnecessarily and falsely, not only in private or by Accident, but openly, commonly, and in Defiance to all the Declarations both of human Legislature and divine.

It may be objected, that there are other Checks upon those whom I have mentioned, namely, the Fears
of

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of being themselves endangered or destroyed, if they do not take Care to keep the Oaths which they have taken, or punished, if they swear falsely. But this is no Remedy for the Mischiefs that shall have been done, and that will always follow, where these Securities are not regarded as they ought to be. It is small Redress or Comfort either for a Prince or People that have been undone, that they who have not kept their Oaths are as much ruined as themselves: He that by false Witness hath been unjustly condemned and cut off, will not be restored to Life again by the Detection and Punishment of the Perjury by which he suffered. Nor will he, who hath been wrongfully deprived of his Estate be able to recover it again, though the Injury he hath received be afterwards never so visible, without more Expence and Trouble, than

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perhaps he is able to go through with. It is therefore even the temporal Interest (though the Honour of God which is much more valuable were not so deeply concerned as it is) of Government in general and of every Man in particular to preserve and maintain as far as in him lies, that *Fear* of an Oath which is of so much Importance to him, and with his utmost Care and even Jealousy to guard that, which next to the good Providence of God is the surest Guard of his Peace, of his Estate and of his Life. To this Purpose, let the Ministers of God be not only allowed, but encouraged and even obliged to represent to Mankind the heinous Nature and the extreme Danger of prophaning the Name of God in vain and rash, as well as in false and malicious Swearing; to denounce God's Anger and his Judgments against it; and as far

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as they are able to persuade Men to beware, lest because of Swearing, our whole Land, like that of *Israel* heretofore, should *mourn*; lest we should all alike be involved in God's Vengeance: For in this World we are not assured of Exemption for any in particular, when God cometh to visit a Land for its Iniquity, but all are liable to the same Events, not only *he that sweareth*, but also *he that feareth an Oath*.

LET the Magistrate convince Offenders, that he doth not, that he will not use the Sword as much *in vain*, as they do the Name of God; let him be an effectual Terror to all such evil Works, by steadily and resolutely exercising the Power entrusted to him, in restraining, correcting, and thereby preventing, at least the open and presumptuous Commission of them, and as much as may be providing, that such Wickedness
may

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may not become national and bring the Wrath of God upon our whole Land. And let every one in particular both by his Example and his Influence, as far as they will reach, check, discountenance and strive to put a Stop to this Wickedness, which strikes so directly at the Glory of God and the Security of Man: that God's Name may be had in Reverence, and we may be entitled to his Favour and Blessing: For he will honour those only, who honour him, and yield a careful and dutiful Obedience to all his Commandments.



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SERMON XIV.



PROV. XXII. 2.

*The rich and poor meet together: the
Lord is the Maker of them all.*

IN discoursing upon these
Words I shall endeavour
in the

*First Place to shew what Persons
are*

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are to be understood by the
rich and poor.

Secondly, How and in what respects these may be said to *meet together.*

Thirdly, ON what Accounts God is said to be *the Maker of them all.*

AFTER which I shall make some Inferences which may be proper for our Consideration, and with them conclude.

First, I AM to shew what Persons are to be understood by the *rich and poor.*

It hath been very justly observed by some who have treated upon this Subject, that it is difficult to fix any such Meaning to the Terms of rich and poor as shall not be liable to Exceptions or Misconstructions. For not only what a Man possesses is to be taken into Consideration, but also
what

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what is needful for him; what his Rank in the World and his Condition of Life necessarily require for their due Support and Maintenance must be estimated and computed, before it can be properly determined by which of these Denominations he is to be distinguished. If we consider the great Inequalities in Mens Circumstances, which have been introduced by the Providence of God and the necessary Occasions of human Society, we shall readily apprehend, that such a Portion of Substance as would be Abundance and Superfluity to a Man in one Rank, would be far from being sufficient to supply the absolutely necessary Demands for the Support of the State and just Dignity of a Person placed in a more elevated Degree; and that the latter may be truly accounted needy and in Want, though possessed of more than what would
make

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make the other very rich. If then we would be able rightly to discriminate and to pronounce who is rich and who is poor, we must consider a Man's Station in the World, and whether he hath more or less than what is sufficient and needful for the Maintenance of his Condition: If after answering the due and just Demands of his Rank, there is still an Overplus and Superfluity remaining to him from his Substance, he is rich: But be his Estate never so great, if it be not sufficient to supply what his Quality and Degree require for their Support, he may as truly be accounted poor, as he who is in Want of Necessaries in any other Rank. This is a true and just Rule for the distinguishing between rich and poor with regard to Mens Condition in the World. But it will not always be easy to apply this Rule, because often none but the

Persons

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Persons themselves can know how their Circumstances are, and what Proportion there is between their Needs and the Supplies of them; and too often for Ends of their own, Men pretend to be in one of these Conditions, when really they are in the other.

THERE is however another Way of judging with relation to the rich and poor, in which there is less Room for Mistake by reason of Mens disguising the Truth and pretending to be other than they are: I mean where it is to be measured by what is needful and sufficient for the supporting, not of the Man's State and Degree in Life, but of his Life itself. In this View he that, besides what is sufficient for his own necessary Food and Cloathing, hath remaining what he can bestow towards supplying the Wants of others, may truly be said to be rich, and to abound; and no one is to be accounted poor
but

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but he who stands in absolute Need of Relief from others, because he neither hath nor is able of himself to provide what is necessary for his Subsistence. It is in this Sense, that the Terms in my Text may most properly be considered by us; and by the *rich and poor who meet together*, I shall understand in general on one Part, those who stand in Need of Relief of their Wants, and on the other, those who have Ability to relieve them.

IN what Respects these may be said to meet together, is what I shall now proceed to enquire into in the

Second Place. THAT *the poor and rich do meet together*; that in all Societies they are intermixed and have Intercourse with one another, is evidently true in Fact. In every Community there is a Subordination of its Members necessary in order to its Subsisting:

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Subsisting: And the Distribution of the Wealth of a People, however equal it may be supposed to have been at the Beginning, will in a very short Time as the Abilities and Management of particular Persons differ, and as the Providence of God gives or denies Success to their Endeavours, the Distribution of the Wealth of a People I say will be very widely disproportioned; and while some possess so great a Share, that their Abundance and Superfluity shall even be a Burden to them, and fill their Minds with Care and Anxiety concerning the necessary Means of securing, rather than of improving and increasing their Substance; others shall find their Portion defective and too little of itself, to answer the Necessities of Life, and that all their Industry and Contrivance must be constantly employed for their mere Support, without any great

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Prospect

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Prospect of bettering their Condition. In fact this is the Case of Men in this Life; and if there were not another Life it would be difficult, if not impossible to vindicate the Equity and Goodness of God towards his Creatures, whose Necessities are equal by Nature, but whose Provision for the Supplies of them is so vastly different. But as good Reasons may be assigned for all this with regard to the general State of Mankind in this World, and as many good Consequences do spring from it to human Society and Government; so God is able to make amends to each particular Person in another Life, whose Portion in this may have been small and insufficient.

If we consider this Matter further, we shall find, not only that the rich and poor do, but that they must meet together; that the Occasions of each

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each are such, as that they mutually stand in Need of one another, and that the Intercourse is necessary on both Sides. Thus for Instance, if he who is poor, who hath not enough in his Possession to supply his Necessities, must by his Labour, or Art, or Intreaty gain something from the rich; the rich Man on his Part will find it necessary to have Recourse to the other for the many Things which he finds or at least fancies to be requisite for him, but which his own Hands would be unable, as he would think unfit to provide for himself.

Thus do Men in every Condition find it necessary for them to meet together: The Industry and Arts of the Poor are necessary to support and adorn the Dignity and State of the Rich: Even the Crowns of Princes are made, and the Gems which add Lustre to them are gathered, by

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mean and laborious Hands; and all the shining Marks of human Grandeur and Distinction are the Works of such as gladly part with them all in Exchange for what they stand in Need of to maintain them in Life, but which without such an Exchange of their Arts and Labours for a Share of the Wealth of others they must be destitute of, and unable to furnish themselves with.

I SHALL now in the

Third Place take into Consideration what is observed in the latter Part of my Text with relation to the rich and poor, of whom I have been speaking, namely, that *the Lord is the Maker of them all.*

WHATEVER Difference there may be in other Respects between the Rich and Poor, there is it seems none at all in respect of the *Maker* of them: In this Particular they are all equal,

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equal, and derive themselves alike from the same Original; they are all the Work of one and the same God, and that whether we regard their Nature or their Condition.

As to the first of these there can be no Doubt. Every Man without Exception, and be his Condition in the World what it will, is the Creature of God, the acknowledged Work of his Hands; and in this Case the Rich and Poor are indisputably upon a Level. But perhaps it may admit of some Question, how far it may be said that the Lord who made them Men, hath made them rich or poor? Men are willing and accustomed in considering this, to impute very much to themselves, and to account for Wealth and Poverty by Industry, frugal Management and Skill or Art on the one Part, and by Idleness, Extravagance of any Kind or what they will call Misfortunes

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and ill Luck on the other. However it will still hold true, that as the holy Scripture expressees it, 1 SAM. ii. 7. *the Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: He bringeth low and lifteth up.*

MEN may be desirous to assign for the Cause of their Advantages above others, their own superior Qualities and Abilities: But let them consider to whom they owe those Powers, whose Gifts they are, and to whose Providence what they account their lucky and oftentimes unlooked for Opportunities and Successes are to be ascribed, and by which their Measure of Wealth hath been filled even to overflowing, and they will learn not to suffer their Hearts to be lifted up, nor will they presume to say, *my Power and the Might of my Hand hath gotten me this Wealth; but they shall remember the Lord their God; for it is he that giveth*

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giveth them Power to get Wealth.

DEUT. viii. 17, 18.

So likewise with regard to the Poor: How well soever we may think to account for their Wants from what we may reckon their Misfortunes, their Failings or their Faults; we must still consider the Providence of God, as what determines and disposes of their Condition; who when he pleases can, and often doth give abundant Riches to those, whose personal Abilities are as mean, and whose Failings and Miscartiages are as numerous and visible as theirs, whose Poverty we would impute to these Causes.

THE Poverty of a Man is not always and of Course to be imputed to any Defect or Fault in him: The utmost Skill and Industry may be and sometimes is unsuccessful; and though Men ought diligently to imp'oy these, yet unless the Blessing of God ac-

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company them, they may find all their Endeavours blasted and disappointed, and themselves constrained to go through the World in a continual Struggle and Conflict with the Pressures of Want and Necessity.

WHETHER therefore a Man be rich or poor, it is God's Appointment that he should be so: And out of this Disparity in the Circumstances of Mankind, he is pleased to produce many excellent Effects; to make Men sensible of his Interposition in their Affairs; to make them necessary to one another; to give them Opportunities of practising many Duties which are peculiar to the State in which they are, and to preserve Subordination and thereby Authority, Government and Peace in the World.

FROM what hath been said we may infer

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First,

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First, THAT since the Rich and Poor meet together, since they are intermixed in the World and so necessarily depend each upon the other, it is their common Interest to promote each others Welfare. Let the Rich consider the Poor and Needy, as those whose Help they cannot be without; and be ready and willing to afford his Assistance to them, who likewise have Need of Support from him. And let the Poor entitle themselves to his Assistance by employing their Industry and their Skill, and where these are wanting, by their peaceable, orderly Behaviour, by their Prayers to God for the Well-being and Happiness of the Rich their Benefactors and of themselves. While each can have this Consideration for the other, the Welfare of both will be effectually promoted; they who are blessed with
Wealth

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Wealth will enjoy it without Disturbance or Envy, and they who are poor will be supported and relieved; the Industrious will be cherished and encouraged; the Disabled, the Aged and the Sick sustained and provided for; and (which is the truest Charity to them) even the Disorderly and the Idle will be brought to become regular and useful: Happy will any City be, that is in such a Case; nor will there remain any Cause of complaining in its Streets.

Secondly, and to conclude: From the latter Part of my Text, which teaches us, that the Lord is the Maker of the Rich and Poor, doth arise a more cogent Motive to this mutual Good-Will to each other.

THE Rich and Poor are Brethren, Children of the same Father, as Creatures of the same God; they ought therefore to regard one another as such. The Rich ought not to despise

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spise the Poor, who is equal to him in that which is the greatest and highest Point of his Honour, I mean his Original, his having God for his Father: On the contrary he should strive to manifest and give full Proof of his grateful Sense of God's Bounty to himself by imitating it and extending his Charity to such of his poor Brethren as stand in need of it and lie within his Reach.

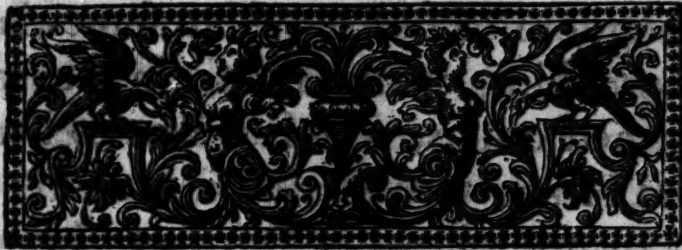
AND the Poor while he considers, that it is God's Appointment that some should be rich and others poor, will from thence learn that it is his Duty to acquiesce in and to be contented with his own Condition, and not to murmur and repine at or envy what he may look on as the more eligible and desirable State of his richer Brethren. He will comfort himself with this Consideration, that as he hath but a small Part of the good Things of this Life committed

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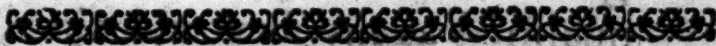
mitted to his Trust he may the more easily employ that well and account for it to his Maker, and he may be fully assured, that God will bestow upon him the better Things of a better World, and will reward his present Patience and Resignation to his Will, and Perseverance in his Service with an exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory hereafter.



SERMON



SERMON XV.



MARK IV. 23.

If any Man have Ears to hear let him hear.



THESE Words are what served for a Conclusion to many of our Saviour's Discourses, and especially to those, in which by making Use of Parables

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Parables and figurative Expressions he concealed the Myſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven from ſome that heard him, while in them he informed others, who had Ears to hear and Hearts to underſtand him.

In my following Diſcourſe I ſhall

I. *First*, SHEW what is meant by having *Ears to hear*.

II. *Secondly*, Conſider the Obligations, which thoſe, who are qualified as my Text mentions, are under, to be careful to perform the Duty contained in it.

I. *First*, I AM to ſhew what is meant by having Ears to hear.

It might ſeem at firſt View, as if our Saviour had no further Deſign in his ſo frequent Uſe of this Phraſe, than the quickening and ſtirring up all his Hearers, and recovering that Attention to what he ſaid, which
without

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without some such awakening expedient is apt to flag, to grow weary and heavy. But it is evident, that this is by Way of Distinction; that it was to his most diligent and eager Hearers that these Words are directed by our Lord, to such as he was pleased to shew more especial Favour to; and that they no Way respected those that either through Ignorance could not, or through Obstinacy would not, or through the just though unsearchable Judgment of God were not thought fit by him to be allowed to understand his Will; those who upon any or all of these Accounts could not be said to have *Ears to hear*.

OUR Lord in several other Places, and especially at the 11th Verse of this Chapter gives us to understand that there were some who had not Ears to hear, and for what Reason they might be said not to have any. He tells

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tells his Disciples, that to them indeed it was *given to know the Mystery of the Kingdom of God*; but that others were not allowed this Privilege; others only heard these Things *spoken in Parables*, that they might neither apprehend what they saw, nor understand what they heard: And the Reason of this is quoted from the Prophet ESAIAS VI. 10. in xiiith Chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel at the 15th Verse. *For this People's Heart is waxed gross, and their Ears are dull of hearing, and their Eyes have they closed, lest at any Time they should see with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and should understand with their Heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.* It is far from being easy to give an Account, what may be the Reasons of God's Proceeding with Men, or their dealing with themselves after this Manner; for
what

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what Cause a God of Mercy should make the *Hearts of Men hard, lest they should be converted and be healed*, or for what Inducement Men themselves, who are reasonable Creatures, and therefore apprehensive of their Interest and of what is conducive to their Happiness, should purposely and willfully *close their Eyes* against that Light, which if they would be directed by it, would not fail to lead them to everlasting Life. But how harsh soever either of these Expressions may at first Sight appear, they are both plainly delivered in holy Scripture, and the Disobedience and Impenitence of Men is therein ascribed sometimes to one and sometimes to the other of them. Thus in the Case of *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians* the Reason is assigned, for which notwithstanding the many terrible Judgments which the immediate and stretched out Hand of God

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did

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did inflict upon them and the several severe Strokes of Vengeance which so fast followed one upon another for their Disobedience and Contumacy, they yet continued and at last perished in them; and it is this, which is so often repeated in that memorable History, *God hardened the Heart of Pharaoh, that he would not let the Children of Israel go.* And thus, for the Willfulness of Men being the Cause of their Impenitence and continuing in Sin, the whole Current of the holy Scripture, by inculcating Repentance as a Duty, exaggerating the Guilt of not performing it, expostulating with Mankind for their Neglect of it, and representing the Punishment which attends the obstinate and final Want of it, doth, besides that it is often done in exprefs Words, sufficiently charge the Wickedness of Men and their Continuance in it upon themselves,

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selves, upon their own Neglect of making Use of the proper Method of Amendment, their closing their Eyes and Ears and turning away their Hearts from the Instructions which God hath provided for them. Which of these is the Cause of the other, is a Question that hath been and will be very much disputed; whether the Willfulness and obstinate Wickedness of Men is caused by, or is the Cause of God's hardening their Hearts? And there need be no Doubt made, but that either of these may be truly said in some Respect to be the Cause of the other. If Men by their Sins provoke the Wrath of God, it is very just in him not only to withdraw his Favour and the Assistance of his Grace from them, but to consign them over by Way of Condemnation and Punishment for the Wickedness they are already guilty of, to such a judicial Hard-

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ness and Stupidity, such an Insensibility and Want of Apprehension either of their Danger or the Means to avoid it, as shall render them incapable of Admonition and Amendment, which is all one with the not having *Ears to hear* the Things that concern their Salvation. Thus supposing the Wickedness of Men, and their free and spontaneous, their wilful and unconstrained Disobedience to the Law of God, to have been first the Cause of God's Anger and his Resolution to punish them, (for it is very harsh to imagine that God would be angry with his Creatures, and fix in himself a Resolution to punish them before they should offend him) the withdrawing from them the Assistance of his Grace, and thereby rendering them incapable of his Favour or of returning into the Way of Life, who had of their own Accord made themselves
unworthy

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unworthy of his Love and chosen the Way of Destruction, cannot be reckoned so much as Rigour and Severity, much less can it be accounted Cruelty or Injustice in God: But it is highly equitable that as the Commission of Sins by them was the Cause of God's Anger to them, so his Anger should for their Punishment leave them to continue in Sin and unable to apprehend the Force, or to receive the Benefit, of those Instructions, by the Help of which others, who *have Ears to hear* them, are led to Salvation. Thus in the Case of my Text, was it formerly with the *Jews*, and is still among Christians.

Of the *Jews* we find, that for the most Part they had neither Ears to hear nor Hearts to understand the Truths which our Saviour preached to them, notwithstanding the near Concern they had in them, and

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the high Importance they were of to Mankind. How justly and adequately by this Proceeding with them, did God avenge himself and punish them for the small Regard they had shewn, and for the unjust and barbarous Usage they had offered, to his other Prophets and Servants, that before that Time had been sent to them: That when he, who was more than all other Prophets, came and brought the Words of eternal Life among them, he would not allow them Ears to hear them, and to receive that Information then, which they had made themselves unworthy of by their Abuse of what had been given before to them: Nor was it a Punishment less justly proportioned to their Crime, that as they themselves by false Glosses, forced Misinterpretations, wilful Forgeries, and ill grounded Traditions, had cast a Mist before the Sense of
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the Law, and involved it in unintelligible and obscure Notions; so the Truths of the Gospel while spoken in their Hearing should be delivered *in Parables*, and the Meaning of them wrapped up so closely, as not to be discerned by them.

As for Christians, and what concerns ourselves: Is it not an obvious Remark, how Neglect of Attendance upon the Service of God, and upon the Hearing of his Word, commonly proceeds to a Want of right Apprehensions of the Duty we owe to him; how the less Men accustom themselves to these Duties, the less ready and able they are to discharge them? So that what was at first their Fault in being guilty of Negligence and Disuse, becomes afterwards a Punishment in Want of Disposition and Power; and while the more they stand in Need of the Mercy of God in this particular, the less capable of

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it they become, and more unfit to receive it.

WE cannot well pretend to the Name of Christians without being ready to acknowledge, that the greatest Punishment that can be laid upon us in this World is Infidelity, a Disbelief of the Truth of our Religion, which as long as it continues, absolutely and altogether cuts a Man off from the Hopes of Salvation, and leaves him to the Justice of God, without any Expectation on his Part of the Mediation of a Saviour in his behalf, or of any other Satisfaction for his Sins, than what he is able to make for them of himself and in his own Person. And yet how often and how justly doth this become the Penalty of prophane and irreverent Treatment of sacred Things! How easily do Men descend from a Want of performing their Duty to God to a Want of Apprehension of

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of the Obligations they are under to do it, from thence to a Slight and Contempt of it and of all that belongs to it, and so at Length to an absolute and resolved Disbelief of the Truths on which it is founded; from whence without a timely and effectual Repentance the next Fall will be the last, and that to all Eternity. And this may be sufficient for our present Purpose not only to shew, but also to vindicate the Ways of God in his Dealings with Men, who while he looks upon all Men as Offenders, might justly punish all according to their Sins; and therefore if in his infinite Mercy he hath been pleased to speak to the World by his Son the Words of Life, he is to be praised for having given to any *Ears to hear them*, but cannot be justly charged with Want of Mercy, if he hath not thought good to afford them to all.

THE

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THE *Jews* it seems as such were no more favoured in this Case, than the rest of Mankind; but out of other Nations, as well as from them, God hath thought fit to call many to the Knowledge of his Truth. Nor can any one among us think himself exempt from being obliged to that Attention which the Text calls for, and our Saviour by so many Repetitions hath shewn the Importance and Necessity of giving, without forfeiting all Claim to common Sense and Apprehension; since, however our Saviour thought fit then to express himself darkly and obscurely to the *Jews*, that they might not understand those Truths, which he for sufficient Reasons which have been and for others that might be assigned, besides those that are known only to his own infinite Wisdom was not pleased to admit them to the Knowledge of; to us Christians

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stians he hath given to know *the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God*, and hath revealed them to us so plainly, as that it must be the Fault rather of our Will, than of our Understanding, if we do not apprehend them.

THE Mysteries, which are the Objects of our Faith and not of our Comprehension, are sufficiently and with satisfactory Credit and Authority recommended to our Belief. The Truths which are the Rules and Directions of our Practice are so clearly proposed, so fully exemplified, and so effectually enforced with *great and precious Promises*, and with Threats of what is most dreadful and terrible to Mankind, that as he who runs may read and understand them, so he who understands them aright and believes them cannot fail of being influenced and determined by them to the Choice of what is best, and to an Endeavour

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your after the obtaining it. But as if all this were not enough, and both Reason, Experience and the further Provision which *Christ* hath made do shew that this of itself is not enough, our Saviour hath required and ordained, as that Men should perform this Duty, so that they should be supplied with what was necessary in order to it. He hath commanded, that they *that have Ears to hear should hear*: And his Apostle *St. Paul*, *Rom. x. 14.* puts the Question, *how shall they hear without a Preacher?* For this Purpose therefore he appointed and promised to continue to the End of the World a Succession of Men, whose Business it should be to preach, as it is that of others to hear; to preach the same Truths, and to press and inculcate the same Duties, which he taught and required his Followers to give Attention to. This brings me to the

Second

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Second Part of my Discourse, wherein I am to consider the Obligations which those who are qualified as my Text mentions, are under, to be careful to perform the Duty contained in it.

THOSE who have Ears to hear, those who by Education or Instruction in the Religion of *Christ* have attained to an Ability of apprehending its Truths and understanding the Obligations which it lays upon Men to perform its Duties, when they are explained to them and pressed upon them, are bound to attend to the Preaching of it by such as are called and appointed for that Purpose.

First, Because the Preaching and Hearing it is the Ordinance and Institution of *Christ*. Our Lord commands us to *hear*; his Apostle teaches us, that we cannot bear without a
Preacher,

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Preacher, who is sent or authorized to instruct us, that this is an Office *which no one, without being called of God*, or according to the Order which he hath established, *taketh to himself*. Certainly all this Preparation was made for some End: Nor would *Christ*, have made it the Duty of some to preach his Word, and at the same Time have left the rest of Mankind at Liberty to chuse whether they would give Ear to what they should say, or whether they would not. It is not then an Opinion of our own greater Knowledge and Capacity to understand our Duty, that will exempt us from that Manner of hearing it which God hath been pleased to prescribe, since if we are not made wiser by what we hear, we shall certainly be made better by what we thus do in Obedience to the declared Will of God and according to his Prescription. Nor
need

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need we apprehend any Danger of Understanding more of our Duty than is needful, though we should study it at Home, and learn it in the House of God too: For all the Means we can use will not be too many, nor can we fear coming to an End of our Enquiries, while we make the *Wisdom of God* the Employment of our Minds and the Subject of our closest Attention.

Secondly, FROM the Consideration of the Necessity of this Instruction arises an Obligation of attending to it.

THE Experience we have of the Proneness of Mankind to Mistakes in Matters of Religion, in which except by Hearing, our Instructors and labouring diligently to possess ourselves of *true* Opinions concerning it, the Devil and our own Frailty and Weakness of Apprehension will not fail to furnish us with *false*, should
teach

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teach us not to depend too much upon our own Knowledge, but to be willing, to be solicitous to give ear to such, as being especially authorized by *Christ* to declare his Will to us, we may hope are especially assisted by him in the faithful Execution of that their Office. We may take it for granted, that the less we think we stand in Need of their Help, we do in reality want it the more; nothing being more directly opposite to the Disposition of Soul which every true Christian ought to find in himself, than such a Pride and Self-Conceit as this, which, while it renders a Man incapable of *receiving with Meekness the ingrafted Word*, the Word implanted by the Help of *Christ's Ministers, which is able to save his Soul* JAM. i. 21. doth deprive him of the favourable Concurrence of God's Holy Spirit, which

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giveth his Grace only to the humble.

1 PET. V. 6.

Thirdly, A further Obligation to hear the word of God arises from the Consideration of the Benefit we shall certainly find from so doing.

HAVE we Ears to hear, and can we employ them to a nobler Purpose than that of hearing God's own Words, and being instructed in his Will? By these our Souls are informed of the true Way to certain Happiness; our Expectations and Endeavours are determined to what will best entertain and reward them; our Lives are influenced to Piety and Virtue, to Faith and Obedience; and all our Faculties are taught the Use they were designed for; are taught how to please God and to promote his Glory and our own Happiness. Surely then as this Sort of Hearing is of greater Moment and Advantage to us than any other, it

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ought to be the most highly esteemed, the most earnestly desired, the most diligently applied to, of all others: And if we make a right Judgment of Things, we should find it one of the greatest among the many Causes we have to be thankful, and to offer Praise to God, that he hath been pleased to shew such great Regard to us, as to admit us into the Number of those to whom he hath given Leave to hear his Words, and Opportunities thereby of *knowing the Mysteries of his Kingdom*: We should consider those Opportunities as Things more valuable, than to be trifled away through Negligence, or rendred useless for Want of being heartily embraced by us, and look upon this Privilege on Earth as an Earnest and the Means of obtaining the still greater Blessings of Heaven. In order to this, and since it is of so very great Moment
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and Importance to us, we ought ever to come to these sacred Ordinances with careful and considerate Preparation; to receive the Doctrines and Instructions delivered to us, with Reverence and Seriousness and pure Affection; *to give earnest Heed to the Things which we have heard, lest at any Time we should let them slip.* HEB. ii. 1. and to *be Doers of the Word and not Hearers only, lest we deceive our own selves,* JAM. i. 22. And let us humbly beseech God to pour upon both those that speak and those that hear the continual Dew of his Grace and heavenly Benediction, that both may reap the Benefit of what they are so much concerned in, namely a right Understanding of his Word and a Practice adjusted to the Rules of it: And then having sincerely and constantly applied ourselves thus qualified to the Discharge of this Duty, it will only re-

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main for us to receive the Reward
of it, the inestimable Treasures of
Divine Knowledge with which it
will enrich us here, and the eternal
Happiness to which that Knowledge
will conduct us hereafter.



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